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# of Life

James Freeman Clarke

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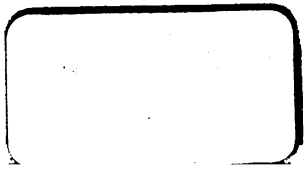

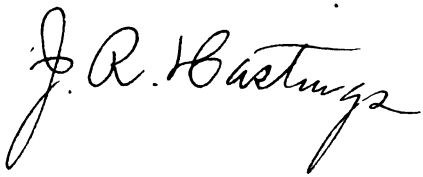

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF LIFE

By

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

Boston
American Unitarian Association
1909

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Miss Eleanor McCormack

TO

THE MEMBERS OF

THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES

ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN

"WHAT GOD GIVES HE GIVES FOREVER"

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I

THE JOYS OF CHRISTMAS

"Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." — LUKE i. 78, 79.

I WILL speak to you this morning of the joy of Christmas. The peculiarity of Christmas joy is that it belongs to the present life, to the present hour, to earthly homes, human love, and is therefore universal. Christmas stands for the blessings which all men inherit by being born under the influences of Christianity,—the birthright blessings of all of us. Easter is also a feast of joy, but it is for those who have faith in immortality. It is a festival of hope, looking forward to a higher world. But Christmas brings pleasure to the believer and unbeliever. No one need sign a creed or make a profession in order to have a happy Christmas. It is the festival of childhood; of children, who have no religious opinions of any kind: it is a feast of joy even in the homes of those whose faith has died out of their hearts. As the sun shines on the evil and the good, on the just and the unjust, so Christmas pours its liberal light into every

home. All are in fellowship with each other around the Christmas tree. All are Christ's little ones together. This is the blessed feeling which Christmas brings every year,—a communion of joy in the coming of a little child. For one week we have a truly catholic and universal church, in which are no divisions, no sects nor parties, no saints nor sinners. Around the cradle of this infant all are one.

Christmas is the apotheosis of infancy. It hallows all infants. It makes all childhood sacred. Every infant in Christian lands is a Christ-child. It is no longer as necessary to say "Take heed how ye despise these little ones" as it was when Jesus said it. In the rudest homes, in the worst conditions of society, the coming of a little child brings a sense of gratitude, wonder, reverence. The star of the magi still stands over the lowliest cradle. The angel song is heard in the hearts of the humblest parents. Christmas makes an aureole of heavenly light around all the infants in Christian lands.

But Christmas is more than this. While Easter gives hope of an immortal life, Christmas brings to us the hope of a better life in this world. There descends on humanity, every Christmas day, an implicit hope that the world is to be redeemed from its wrongs and sins. It is not explicit; it is not often expressed to ourselves. It is a feeling hidden in the heart, not any distinct thought. All inspirations, before they become

clear to the intelligence, begin thus as obscure sentiments, which, like seeds hidden in the ground, develop afterward into opinions, beliefs, and knowledge.

Such a sentiment comes every Christmas to all of us. Evil is overcome for a while by good. The world is not as bad a place as it seemed. Christmas comes like sunshine after storm. The clouds roll away in great purple masses, making a background of shade behind meadows, woods, and hills, all bathed in the same glorious light. Whatever be the cause of this glad, hopeful feeling which pervades all Christian lands at this time, the fact is evident. Gloomy and cynical philosophers are silent; gloomy theologians retire. What minister, be he ever so orthodox, would think of preaching about hell and eternal punishment on Christmas day! We sing the hymns of joy, we read the psalms of thanksgiving, at this time. The world is not altogether a vale of tears, even to the sad-browed Calvin.

It was a fortunate thing for the poor slaves that the South took its customs from the Church of England, and not from the Puritans. For the slaves had their merry Christmas, and during one week in the long year the weight of their bondage was lightened. They could go and come, and be happy in their cabins, eat and drink, sing, dance, and play. They became as little children, and the blessing of the Christ-child fell on them too.

I once attended a midnight mass in the Cathedral of Genoa on the night before Christmas. The full moon bathed the marble walls in soft beauty, and when we entered we found the vast space filled with a crowd listening to the glad music and gazing at the ceremonies of the high altar. We stood near a chapel, where, carved in stone, knelt the figure of a cardinal of the Pallavicini house, while around him were kneeling princes and beggars, old men and little children. Such a union in common worship does men good; it puts them in mind of the ever-present providence of God, who continually sends to his children new prophets and redeemers, coming in the form of little children.

On Christmas all the world unites in a common gladness. All over Germany the Christmas trees are lighted. In England the yule-log is still kindled in the baronial halls; though Walter Scott lamented that even in his day many of the old Christmas customs had gone by,—

"On Christmas eve, the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve, the mass was sung.
. . . . . .
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and thrall.
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage and the town
Brought tidings of salvation down."

If we attempt to analyze the feeling which be-

longs to the birth of Christ, it may be that we see in the case of the infant Jesus how God sends, in a new-born child, new hope for the children of men. The world is ever made new by the arrival of children. In every little child there appears the possibility of a new spiritual and moral impulse. Unimagined hopes cluster around every cradle. We know what men are,—they have shown their possibilities; but no one knows what new possibilities are hidden from our sight in each infant. He may be a Shakespeare or a Newton, the prophet of a new age, the saint who shall inspire a purer faith, the sage to discover the laws which shall mold a better civilization, the reformer to unbind heavy burdens and remove all miseries. Thus hope comes to us with little children. They may be the seeds of mighty possibilities, of forces giving a new impulse to the race. Though we are bound fast in the chains of inexorable law, of fixed external conditions, every infant brings a new and incalculable factor of moral force; and through each of these little ones there is an open way by which the higher world may come down into ours to produce new morals and better manners.

Christmas and its joys are the unconscious testimony of the human heart to the universal blessings which have been given man by the birth of one child. This joy is confined to no church. It belongs to Roman Catholic and Protestant, to the Greek Church and the Armenian, to the

Quaker and the Unitarian. It passes easily beyond the boundaries of profession and name. It is not requisite that a man shall even be a Christian in order to enjoy Christmas. For some feelings become a part of the spiritual constitution of our race. They come to us by the law of heredity. We inherit these promises; we inherit this spiritual life. Generation after generation has been fed by the words, the life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus, until we have in the very texture and fibre of our nature a tendency to certain convictions and purposes. Our Christian faith is born with us and gives us an unconscious and involuntary joy. We look at the world with a glad expectation, we look to the future with a happy hope, which we should not have had if Jesus had not been born.

There is no doubt that the whole Christian world has a more living sense of the nearness of God, of his providence, of his love, than it would have had but for the profound faith of Jesus. A sense of the fatherly love of God has become a part of your instinctive faith and mine. It is not merely a belief of our judgment, but a feeling of our heart. Jesus has brought mankind nearer to the Father. When we listen to a Hindu like Mozoomdar, and hear him tell how, without any Christian missionary or Christian church, he was brought into the peace of God by the power of Jesus, we see that such divine truths as these can be carried over the whole world in ways we

know not of. Many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Peter and Paul, Augustine and Luther, Channing and Stanley, Martineau, Wesley, and Swedenborg, in the kingdom of heaven. Then they will say, "The Holy Spirit, which is like the wind and breathes where it will, has taken of the things of Jesus and shown them unto us." We also cry, "Abba, Father!" So we, too, belong to the household of God. Invisible influences carry the seeds of truth from continent to continent, and no one can tell how they come or how they go. The aspirations of the soul, the hunger of the human heart for divine love, the unconquerable mind of man looking out of the things seen to those unseen,—these are the mighty angels which fly through the heavens, bearing the great faiths of the soul from shore to shore.

You and I, my dear friends, have known sorrow. We have all had our dark hours, our lonely days,—the times when the heavens gathered blackness and love died out of our hearts. Then there came to us a dawn of hope, light out of darkness. Some peace fell gently into our soul. We saw again that all things were working together for good while we trusted and loved God. We heard the voice of Jesus, saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Some words of Christ's which we had heard a hundred times suddenly came up in our soul with a new power. As the seed which has long remained dry and seemingly

dead begins at last to germinate and sends up its stalk and opens its leaves and flowers, so the truths of Jesus, hidden in the heart, come up to be our strength and salvation in these great crises.

I have known those who had elaborated a theory by which the whole universe was turned into a mechanism, and God found to be an unnecessary hypothesis. The great web of law and force was woven ceaselessly without any divine providence. Their system seemed complete on every side. "There can be no such things," they said, "as sin or salvation; for man's conduct is the result of irresistible forces in his brain and blood. What we call conscience is a modification of the gray matter of the brain. Immortality is not only unproved, but it is unprovable. Righteousness is a question of temperament." The theory was carefully elaborated and seemed to be demonstrated. But all at once we hear that these advanced thinkers, so triumphant in their unanswerable logic, have gone into the Roman Catholic Church, or been confirmed in the Episcopal Church, or been converted by Moody and Sankey. What was the cause of this sudden conversion? It was because they had left out of their system the hunger of their own heart for something infinite and eternal. They had reasoned as though man were only an argumentative machine. They had denied the existence of a soul, and their soul had suddenly claimed its rights. The whole of their admirable system

melted away, like the ice palace in St. Petersburg at the return of the sun. Then how sweet seemed the divine love of Jesus, which showed once more the face of a heavenly Father! God spoke to them in their hearts, and said, "This my son was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found."

There are hours also in which we are conscious of sin. We had thought ourselves strong, and find that we are weak. We meant to do right, and we go wrong. We repay kindness with ingratitude; we lead lives of worldliness, empty of any solid reality; we are selfish and willful, and do not see how we can ever be different. What blessed influence is it which then calls out of our memory the words of Christ: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "I came to seek and save those who are lost." In that hour we have found the friend we need,—the only one in all this wide world who can bring to us the sense of an infinite, inexhaustible, pardoning love. Everywhere else we find the inexorable law that what we sow we reap: we have what we pay for. The proverbs of the world announce blessings for the prudent, the wise, the industrious, the faithful.

The philosophy of the world teaches the inflexible, inexorable action of natural law. The Bible itself declares that those who sow to the flesh shall reap corruption, and that every man shall be judged according to his works. We assent to this law that it is good. We readily admit that this is all true. But what hope, then, for those who have gone wrong? What an infinite blessing it is at last to see that besides law there is love, that God has not forgotten or forsaken his poor, weak, sinful child, and that the very deepest meaning of the life of Jesus is that he brings a hope to the utterly discouraged and forsaken! When we come to this, what a joy enters the heart! Then we say, "I will arise and go to my Father!" He who has gone through this experience has the witness in himself that Jesus has been sent to him by God. He needs no "evidences of Christianity." He does not care about the proof from prophecy and miracles. It is nothing to him that he is not able to show that the Fourth Gospel was written by John. His faith in Jesus rests on a more solid foundation than argument. "The life I now live," he says, "I live by faith in the Son of God." "I know that I have passed from despair and misery to peace and joy, and that I owe this to the coming of the Son of Man." It is not necessary that a child should know how to prove by satisfactory logic the existence and the goodness of his father and mother. He loves them, and his love is the

best knowledge. He who loves dwells in God, and God in him; and he needs no other evidence.

There are hours of bereavement which come to us all, when those we love the most and who love us best disappear from our side and leave us alone. In those sad moments we say: "Shall I ever see thee again, my brother, my friend, thou whose love for me was so wonderful? Has this most blessed gift of human life been given only to be taken away again? What proof have I of immortality? The old arguments which seemed strong enough when I had all I loved about me are too weak now! Open your lips, O secret, hidden from the foundation of the world! Where have they gone, the wise, the tender, the noble souls whose friendship made life worth living?"

At such times argument is worthless. We do not wish to have a future life made probable, we wish to know it. And Jesus never argues for immortality by our methods of reasoning. He beholds it by a mighty intuition, and speaks of it with a certainty which awakens our own deepest faith.

He says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "Because I live, ye shall live also." The only sufficient evidence of future immortality is present immortality. He who lives now in the presence of eternal things—God, truth, justice, infinite love, a perfect Providence—he finds immortal life abiding in him. This inward

experience of eternal things makes us sure of undying being. Death disappears from our sight while we thus live: only life remains. Every prayer for strength to do our duty brings us into communion with the unseen world. Every faithful effort to do well, every hour of patient endurance, puts us into communion with the things above. Thus Jesus, by lifting us into a nobler region of present life, plants within us convictions of immortality. "He who lives and believes in me shall never die." He who lives now as I live, he who believes in the truth which I make known, to him death is nothing.

The great blessing, then, which Jesus has bestowed on mankind, and which makes the whole world joyful because of his coming, is that he leads us up into a richer and fuller life. It is not that he teaches truths never known before, or that he had supernatural power over the outward world. It is that he has made God's love, God's providence, divine truth, immortality, a part of the experience of mankind. He has made these convictions to enter into our knowledge, far beneath the region of speculation and argument. Argument and reasoning give us opinions and beliefs, but knowledge comes only from experience. Only by experience of outward things we know the outward world; by inward experience alone we know the world of infinite truth, beauty, and love. Jesus has given to mankind the great impulse which has quickened in them these ex-

periences, and so he continues to-day to be the best friend and helper of the human race.

There is a beautiful legend that on Christmas all evil spirits are deprived of their power to harm, and that even the devils and the accursed in hell enjoy a brief rest from sin and misery. Shakespere has used this legend:

> "Ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
> And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;
> The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
> . . . . . .
> So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

However that may be, it is certainly true that many evil spirits are held in check by the coming of Christmas. Christmas assuaged the spirit of oppression at the South, and brought rest to the slave; it pacifies the strife of parties, and makes a vacation in the bitterness of politics; it suspends the quarrels of sects. The hard bigot on one side and the sharp infidel on the other take each other's hands over the child's cradle. The man who bitterly attacks Christianity and he who defends it with an equal bitterness enjoy a kindly Christmas side by side. All this is a presage of the time when wars shall cease; when the whole Church shall be one; when the Christ of love and truth shall be everywhere accepted, obeyed, and loved, and the knowledge of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

II

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

"In the multidude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul."— PSALM xciv., 19.

WE have wished each other "A Merry Christmas": we now wish each other "A Happy New Year." Merriment is good for a while, but it does not last long. It belongs to a brief period, like Christmas. But happiness may extend through the whole year, and that is why we wish merriment for Christmas and happiness for the new year.

It is not enough, however, to *wish* each other a happy new year: if we can, we should help each other to *make* it happy. And I will offer a few suggestions this morning as to how we can make the new year a happy one for ourselves and others.

Let us, first of all, remember that, while pleasure comes from without, happiness comes from within. Pleasure is a stimulus sent to excite and arouse the faculties,—good and useful, not to be despised. The Lord has filled life with various pleasures,—pleasures for the eye and ear, the imagination and affection. Pleasant are the sights and sounds of nature,—the sweet breath of morn, the glorious approach of the sun, the

charm of the songs of birds proclaiming that their life is joyous. Pleasant is the activity of a new day, coming full of hope; pleasant the calm approach of evening, and the repose of night. Pleasant the meeting with friends, the excitement of intelligent conversation, the atmosphere of friendship, the delicacy of fine culture. All these give pleasure, but not happiness. All such excitement is transient, and meant to be so. It is not food for the soul. Surround yourself with all possible pleasures, and, if there is emptiness within, they give no satisfaction. Consider the case of a man like Byron,—noble, born rich, endowed with the most original genius, surrounded by admiration and affection, all the pleasures of life within his reach, all worldly ambitions open to him, and he himself the most dissatisfied man in Europe, driven into exile by the furies of his own willful and stubborn choice; he himself just what he called Rousseau,—"a self-torturing sophist," "an apostle of affliction." Read the Book of Ecclesiastes, and find there the utter misery of a king who had fed his heart on all the pleasures and triumphs of the world, and ended by thinking death better than life, and better than both never to have been born. And, on the other hand, consider Milton, sitting in blindness, poverty, fallen on evil days and tongues, compassed round with darkness and dangers,—instead of the book of knowledge of nature's works, only a universal blank,—but with

a diviner light shining in his soul than any of which mortal thought could dream. Consider that English statesman of our own day, Fawcett, also blind, but orator, teacher of men, and leader of thought; who was able, as Postmaster-General, to put new vigor into the British post-office; able, on the floor of the House of Commons, to answer from an unfailing memory, and with perfect accuracy, questions as to dates, numbers, and details of business. These are men of genius; but who that has visited the homes of the poor, the bedside of the incurable sufferer, but has been struck with the serenity, the peace, the satisfaction, which so often causes us who came to give comfort to receive more than we are able to give?

As I sit near my study window, of a summer day, I often look with pleasure at a tall and graceful birch-tree, whose light foliage dances in the sunlight as gayly as do the little birds which flit around it. Yesterday, while writing this sermon, I looked up, and saw it bent down with a weight of frost, but with a new charm, an added grace, and a more ethereal beauty, So have I seen some dear friend, who seemed only fitted for happy fortune, stripped by the wintry blast, and bending under a load of disaster, but with a more heavenly content and a nobler joy flowing from within than ever before. All this teaches us how true is the scripture which tells us that "out of

the heart are the issues of life," and how wise the poet who reminds us that

"We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live.
And would we aught behold of higher worth,
Then from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the earth:
We may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are within."

This is, therefore, the first thing to remember, if we wish for a happy year: that pleasure, which comes from without, is evanescent; but happiness, which comes from within, is permanent. Not what we have, but what we are, is the one thing needful. From our own life, being, character, flows true happiness into the heart. "In the multitude of thoughts within me, God's comforts delight my soul."

The next suggestion I make is this: pleasures come from transient and successive impulses, happiness flows in a continuous stream. What shall give this continuity to our life? We need some steady purpose, in order not to be swept away by the constant distractions of every day. We ought not to be tossed here and there by the waves of circumstance; not to drift with every chance current, but to steer in a fixed direction. This gives real content. We owe a great deal to daily work; and, if we are not compelled to

work, we should seek some regular work to do. Then we have the sense of accomplishment, of going forward, finishing something. Discontent largely comes from not putting ourselves to some steady business, in which we can make progress. Besides the necessary work of every day, it is well to have a plan or useful purpose,—something to do which we are not compelled to do, outside of the mere routine of life. We see little children with some such object, making a collection of seals or stamps or autographs. That is better than having to say, "What shall I do?" It gives a certain continuity even to a child's life, and these little enterprises should be encouraged.

A higher object than this is to have some permanent study, which shall give unity to the year; the pursuit of some art or science to which we feel ourselves attracted. Select something,—botany, geology, the study of the habits of birds or animals. Take a period of history, and make it an object to find out all that can be known in regard to it. Every such study widens and opens as we advance. It leads us to higher elevations, to the survey of a broader horizon. It is a spell, drawing us on to new vistas of thought and insight. We begin anywhere, and go everywhere. A man who has some special study, it hardly matters what, has that much purpose in his life. He is saved from desultory thought, develops powers of accurate observation. He has a thread of unity in this pursuit, which is itself an education

of the will, giving concentration, grasp, and persistent determination of character.

One special advantage of such a study is that it takes us out of ourselves, while the pursuit of pleasure ends in self. To put ourselves resolutely into some pursuit outside of mere enjoyment is a check to egotism, and enlarges the soul. This, also, helps to make a happy new year.

The planet on which we live is, as we know, moved by two antagonistic forces,—the centripetal and the centrifugal forces,—one pulling it inward to the centre, the other driving it outward. If one of these forces acted exclusively, the planet would drop into the sun, and be lost there; if the other acted exclusively, it would fly off into outer darkness and emptiness. So the soul of man is made to revolve in the orbit of human life by the action of two similar polar forces,—one drawing him inward on self, the other taking him out of self, and interesting him in what is outside,—in nature, truth, society, country, mankind. Both motives are necessary, and each must regulate the other.

Some persons tell us that a desire for personal happiness is the only motive in the human soul; that, if we care for others, it is because we find that this increases our own happiness. It is either selfishness pure and simple, or selfishness in disguise, which moves us all and moves us always. They quote Pope:

"O happiness! our being's end and aim;
Good, pleasure, ease, content, whate'er thy name;
That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live or dare to die."

But no! It is not true that man is only moved by a desire for happiness, or that he has self always in mind. We do not find happiness thus, by looking for it or seeking it. It comes to us when we are thinking of other things, when we forget ourselves in other persons, other lives or industries, which take us away from ourselves. We must be interested in these for their sake, not for our own, in order to find joy in them. Self-seeking takes us out of sympathy with men and things. By itself alone, it would end in utter stagnation of mind and heart, in loneliness of soul and moral death. On the other hand, to have no personal purpose, no self-direction, no independent aim in life, to be wholly at the mercy of outside interests, to be hurried out of ourselves by external influences,—this would end in the loss of individual character, personal conviction, and independent purpose. Every soul is a unit in the sight of God; every soul is a seed to be unfolded according to its own law, to grow up in all things into what God meant it to be. God has made each one of us for some special purpose, great or small; something that *we* must do, and no other. To one he gives five talents, to

another two, and to another one; but each is to use and improve his talent.

This year, then, let us each endeavor to grow,—to grow according to the law of our own being; to be ourselves, and no one else; to be our best selves, and so to find out our own strength and weakness. Let us be true to ourselves, be faithful to the light God gives us; not be moulded by fashion, but stand on our own feet,—this gives every one some strength, some power to do good. In order to give, we must have. In order to help others, we must be something ourselves.

And then, having something of our own, let us give. Let the life which God sends to our own mind and heart go forth freely to find other minds and hearts. Do good, hoping for nothing again, satisfied that it is blessing enough to be able to bless others, and that it is more blessed to give than to receive. What a happy new year it will be to us, if its hours, as they come and go, find us not minding our own good solely, but also the good and joy of others! Let us educate ourselves to think of what others need, of what will sweeten life to them. Let us acquire those habits of kindly action and kindly speech, that aroma of good will which sends joy and strength into other hearts. This care for the happiness of others, this thought of what they need, will be returned to us, full measure, pressed down and running over.

There is a great deal of sympathy in the world, but it needs to be directed by good sense. There is a great deal of good feeling, but it needs to be guided. Impulses of good nature are not enough. The habit we all want is to think of others, to remember them, to put ourselves in their place by an effort of imagination. This is what helps others the most, and for which they are the most grateful. To put ourselves by their side, to enter thoughtfully and patiently into their situation,—this is what is wanted.

> "Not what we give, but what we share;
> For the gift without the giver is bare."

We must take interest in persons as well as in masses, in individuals as well as in classes. When we talk about the laboring classes or the criminal classes or the suffering classes, we put them away from ourselves. Therefore, study each man as a person, with personal qualities, needs, wants; study each one lovingly, as a child of God, meant by God for a special end. We study the organization of a plant as an insect with awe, seeing the great creative power therein. How much more shall we look with wonder on that strange, complex phenomenon, a human soul? What depths, what possibilities of good and evil, what unexhausted powers! Outwardly, men seem commonplace, their lives trivial. But put yourself into real relations with any human being, and you are entering the temple of the Most High. I

stand in the solemn cathedral, with its multitude of chapels, its soaring columns, its interlacing arches, its gorgeous windows, its gloom and glory. Awe falls on my soul as I remember the prayers, the anthems, the aspirations, which have gone up in this place to God. But a higher fear and awe falls on us when we witness the struggles of a human soul. Then we say, "One stands here greater than the temple." "This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." There is nothing so interesting to man as man. That is why we read novels, forgetting that no such romances were ever invented as exist by our side in human lives. This will be a happy year if we learn in it to find a new interest in our fellow-men.

But, for such a work, we need a higher inspiration than that of human genius. We must be led by the Spirit. What a peace comes to us, when we realize that there is such an inspiration always waiting for us; that we need only to consent to be led, and we shall have given us what to think and say and do! Then we are ready for all occasions, then no duty is too hard; for we have a well of water within the soul perpetually flowing,—a guidance and influence sufficient for all things. Let us remember that we are never asked to do a duty but that power will be given us with which to do it. This year let us grow in grace; let us lean more and more on this inward inspiration; let us be sure that this comfort, this light,

this guidance, this strength and peace, may always be ours.

The past year has brought many joys and sorrows. It has taken from us dear and noble friends. It has given us great opportunities. It has brought to us the beauties of nature, the delights of friendship, the glories of an ideal world, the inspirations from on high, the movements of human history, the progress of mankind. Let us be grateful for all, and trust in God for the future.

III

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE COMING YEAR

"Redeeming the time."— Eph. v. 16.

We have a new year before us. The question is, "How shall we get the most out of it?" This is what the text implies by "redeeming the time," —that is, buying it back after it has passed, keeping it when it is gone. Redemption means paying a ransom in order to set a slave free!

What a wonderful thing it is that we should be alive? If we live millions of years, nothing can happen to us more wonderful than this,— that we have begun to be, that we are born into this great universe, infinite in extent, everlasting in duration, and filled with the presence of divine power, wisdom, and love. We have been created, by a divine foreknowledge and purpose, to be living souls, capable of knowledge, love, action, progress, goodness, joy. We have been placed in one of the many mansions of our Father's house, to grow up into what he means us to be. This entrance into the universe is such an amazing event that it might easily overwhelm us with its wonder. But we are so softly cradled into being that we do not feel the enormous change. As Wordsworth says, the little child is so occu-

pied with the earth and its thousand interests that the outward wonders conceal from him the vastly greater inward wonder. But, to make the most of life, we must see this wonder of existence. We must feel what an unspeakable gift was bestowed on each of us in that we live. Awe and wonder before the Infinite and Eternal, into whose presence we have come; a sense of divine beauty flowing through this universe of inexhaustible variety and novelty,—these feelings lift up the soul, and create a boundless longing to see, to know, to immerse ourselves in this miraculous universe.

For the world itself is the greatest of all miracles. The year, as it comes and goes, is miraculous all through. Do not allow custom to stale to your minds its infinite variety. It is a miracle when spring and summer awaken nature to a new life. Every tribe of living things,—insects,—the sweet song of summer birds, the tenderness and grandeur of sky and sea, sunrise and sunset, the abyss of the midnight heavens, the stars in their solemn courses,—all are miracles coming fresh from the infinite abyss of being.

If you would get the most out of the year, fill your soul with a sense of these wonders; and, if you have nothing else to be thankful for, rejoice in this majestic universe and this divine presence, and be grateful for the mysterious life within you which God has given.

Think also this,—that each of us has been cre-

ated for a special work, that each is an essential part of the great whole, and that, as the soul is unfolded and we are developed more and more, we shall find ourselves here for a special mission. Let us not think lightly of our destiny. Christ, it is said, was "before Abraham" in the purpose of God; he was foreordained, before the foundation of the world, to be the saviour of mankind. But each of us was also foreordained before the foundation of the world. To one God gives ten talents, to another five, to another one; but the man who has one talent is not to hide it in the ground, for it is his Lord's money, not his. Perhaps many a great shipful of passengers depends for its safety on the accuracy of its chronometer. But the chronometer needs not only its mainspring and attachments: the smallest pin out of place may make it go wrong. The smallest pin is necessary to the integrity of the timekeeper. So each of us is an integral part of God's world; if we are faithful in the least, we shall be made faithful in much. God may see more in the good work of his humblest child than in the loudly proclaimed virtues of the sages and leaders of the world. Put your two mites into God's treasury this coming year. Do not say: "What can *I* do? I have no influence, no great means, no position. It is needless for me to try to be of any great use in the world." This is often vanity disguising itself as humility. Because you cannot do as much as others, will you

refuse to do anything? If we would get the most good out of the coming year, let us take every opportunity which comes of loving God by helping man. Wordsworth says that it is

> "His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love"

which make up

> "That best portion of a good man's life."

Those who think they are not doing anything often do a great deal by *being something*. If we mean to do all we can, we shall succeed, whether we know it or not. Thirty or forty years ago I read Browning's poem called "Pippa Passes," which tells how a young girl, going through the street, her heart full of love and truth, singing her song of innocent good will, changed the hearts of the murderers, the worldly and the selfish, who heard her as she went by. It is a lovely illustration of the odor of sanctity, the beauty of holiness, the charm of innocence. The pure in heart not only see God, but show God to others. The artists painted the saint with a visible halo round his head, or an aureole around his form. But an invisible aureole attends the innocent child, goes with the pure-minded boy and girl; and an influence emanates unconsciously from the ripened virtue of the good man and good woman who have been stanch in

the cause of right, till righteousness has in them become consolidated into character.

Jesus praised the woman who did a slight deed of tender love, saying, "She has done what she could." Let us this year do what we can, and be all we can, for truth and right, and be sure we shall get most in this way out of the months and days.

At first sight, we seem to be enslaved by time. It bears us all along together, as a powerful current carries ships and boats on, side by side. We cannot get out of the present time. We cannot go back and live again in yesterday, or forward and live beforehand in to-morrow. We are held fast by the moment in which we are. A fugitive moment, it is presently behind us, and then the next moment takes possession of us. We cannot lengthen or shorten the hour, the day, or the year, by any effort of human wit or will. We are carried on together by the irresistible current, from childhood to youth, youth to manhood, manhood to age.

Though time always proceeds at the same rate, it often seems to go fast or slow, according to our mood. When we are idly waiting for some one to come, how slow the time goes! When we are very busy, and very much interested in what we are doing, how fast it goes! When we are active, the days fly by, the weeks hasten away, the years go like the wind. They appear to be very

short while passing, but, when we look back on them, they suddenly become very long. A year filled with a variety of interesting incidents seems a long year to look back upon. One in which we have been going through a mechanical routine, with little excitement of thought and feeling, appears short.

From these observations we may deduce this rule: "In order to lengthen the year, put a great deal into it."

It is not only true that

> "One crowded hour of glorious life
> Is worth an age without a name,"

but it is also worth more than an age of indolence and apathy.

That is why Tennyson says,—

> "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

Time, and what we put into it, somewhat resembles a chemical solution. Take a glass of water and dissolve salt in it. After a while it will dissolve no more,—we say, "It is saturated." But, when it will dissolve no more salt, it will dissolve a certain amount of sugar. So you can put into a minute of time only just so much manual labor, but you can also add to the same moment thought and love. Some people, while working with their hands, can also converse, or reflect, or read. When Robert Collyer was a blacksmith, he used

to have an open book by the side of his bellows, and read while he was working the bellows.

A minute will hold only just so much manual labor, just so much mechanical industry; but who can say just how much thought, emotion, imagination, and love can be put into it? It is, therefore, the action of the higher human powers which lengthens life; which turns an hour into a day, and one year into ten. Some of the greatest souls who have lighted up the earth have had a short life, if measured by years; but how long, if we consider the number of their great endeavors and accomplishments! The artist Rafaelle died when only thirty-seven. Yet, if we consider the quantity and quality of his creative work, how long his life appears! He painted an innumerable multitude of Madonnas, eighty portraits, the frescos in the Vatican, the cartoons, and an immense number of altar-pieces, drawings, arabesques, and groups of graceful figures. His soul was an ever-flowing stream, an exulting and abounding river of thought and beauty.

Not only genius, but goodness, lengthens out our days. How long are the lives of those generous souls who live for others! Most of us, each day, think only of what we can get or do for ourselves; but there are those who acquire the habit of helping others, of comforting, of adding cheerfulness and strength wherever they go. To those who thus give, much is given in return,—contentment, trust in God, confidence in

their fellow-men, sweet hopes, peaceful memories. Such lives may seem to have little incident, no adventures,—you could not make the shortest story out of them; and yet how full they are! Yes, full, pressed down and running over with the vitality of the soul!

To fill life full, you must open it upward, toward truth, beauty, goodness. Mere excitement is not life; for all excitements weary, and are succeeded by depression. The mere pleasure-seeker becomes dreadfully tired after a while. The hard routine of work, into which no love and no thought enter, and which is done from necessity, not duty, also leaves us in a lethargy. In order to "redeem time," we must look up, and not down. Seeking things below takes our strength out of us: waiting on the Lord for his higher gifts renews our strength day by day.

One of time's laws is that it makes all outward things grow old, decay and die. The rocks crumble, the mountains are washed down; the great Sequoia pine, which has lived four thousand years, at last totters and falls. The Pyramids will not last forever; Niagara is eating itself away. The moon so radiantly fair is, they say, a dead moon, with no life on its surface. The earth will wax old as a garment, the sun grow dim and fade out of the sky, or blaze up into an all-devouring conflagration. All organized beings are subject to the same immutable law,—

everything which lives must grow old and die. The ineffable charm of infancy passes; the beauty and strength of youth go by; the young man becomes old, the old man departs. Everything is transient, nothing is permanent.

Everything? No, not everything. The higher nature in man rises above the power of this law of time; it does not grow old, does not decay, cannot die. We all have within us the principle of immortal youth. Thought is always young. Knowledge never grows old. Joy in the beauty of nature, in the work of daily duty, in the divine love, gives to age the charm of childhood.

We can get good out of the coming year by helping those who are engaged in really good work. In Boston, we have so many charities that we are puzzled to know which to choose as a sphere of work. Let me call your attention to one which needs and deserves special help. It is the Children's Aid Society. Years ago, it was found that little boys, guilty of petty offenses, were sent to jail or to Deer Island, where they were usually made worse, and not better. It was, therefore, thought well to establish a home in the country, to which the courts might send them, and where they could have out-door work, fresh air, study and play in just proportions. Then it was found that these boys, who while in the streets of the city were growing up to be criminals, became good and happy in their new en-

vironment. They were transferred after a time to families in the country, where they could become useful men.

Such humanities are the things which the fingers of Decay cannot efface nor Death destroy, which triumph over the law of change and loss, because firmly founded on the rock of eternal being. They share the immortality of God, who is above all time. "He," says James Martineau, "is the great *I am*. With him nothing passes, nothing fades. He is the sun which neither sets nor rises. Nothing in him is transient or finite: all is permanent and infinite. His truth expresses what is unchangeable; his beauty, an everlasting ideal. He is the ground-thought of the universe; before his eye the accidents of being fall away. *Our* intellect climbs from fact to law, from law to cause: *his* mediates downward from infinite essence into multiform expression."

Whenever our soul touches this divine essence, which fills nature and life and is not far from any one of us, which includes us all, then we escape the penalties of time and sense. Every moment in which we obey the law of right and deny a temptation to do wrong translates us out of time into eternity. Then we come in contact with God. Every throb of disinterested love, every sincere struggle to do good, makes us, as the apostle says, "partakers of the divine nature." This is why Jesus says, "He who believes in me shall never die," and "He who believes in me has

everlasting life abiding in him." But he meant by this, faith in that divine truth and love which dwelt in him, that heavenly spirit which was incarnate in him, that nobleness of soul which made him the Immanuel,—God with us. For God comes to us in every such holy, pure, and generous nature, and most of all in Jesus, because his life was most full of God.

In order to be forever young, we must have this life, which is "hid with Christ in God"; this life in two worlds, the world of time and that of eternity. If we live only in the world of time, we are subject always to decay and loss. Things grow worse to us, not better. The world looks worse to us. Things seem to be going wrong. We ourselves make no progress. That is why some men seem never to soften or to expand. They pass through a long experience, and learn nothing by it; they repeat forever the faults and mistakes of the past. To them the story of their early days is "not a poem, but an almanac." They are the Bourbons of existence, who learn nothing and forget nothing. The knowledge they acquire does not pass into them as a source of growth, but collects outside of their mind as a crust and shell. To them there is nothing sacred in existence, nothing holy in faith and love, in duty and generosity; nothing divine in the glory of sunrise, the roll of ocean, the smile of infancy, the martyr's patience, or the Christian's hope. All is bare utility,—cold, hard, dying,

and dead. They are dead while alive, old when they are young. To them the years bring nothing, and add nothing.

But others live in two worlds,—that of sense and time, that of soul and eternity. No event to them is simply material, no fact merely physical. There is a meaning in it all,—an intelligent purpose, a divine wisdom. So the best of what happens to them enters into them, and becomes part of themselves. They drink at the fountain of perpetual youth. Christ's thought and love pass into their soul. They are the little children whom he takes in his arms and blesses.

To get the most out of the coming year, we must put the most into it. And we put the most into it by living in a spirit of *earnestness*, doing with our might what our hand finds to do, not trifling with the golden hours, but receiving each as a precious gift from God. Only such earnest purpose makes the day a blessing, insures progress from good to better, and causes us to live in eternity while we are in time. They are the happiest who value every hour, who put good work into it, who do not procrastinate, who do everything now, and do it as well as it can be done. These make of life a fine art. Such men say each year, in the words of our dear brother and friend:

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!

Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast;
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

So we "redeem the time," so free ourselves from its despotic law of change and decay. When we put all the good we can into the year, we shall get all the good we may out of the year. Each moment of time may thus bring to us a glow and throb of eternal existence, make us inwardly younger as we grow older, until we enter that perfect state of which it is written that "time shall be no longer."

IV

THE TRANSFORMATION OF YEARS INTO LIFE

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."—2 Cor., 4. 16.

The problem of human existence may be stated thus: "How can we change Time into Life?" We know very well that time can be changed into force by mechanical contrivances. All the mechanical powers—the lever, the pulley, the inclined plane, the wheel, the wedge—are contrivances of this sort. The object of each is to change time into force, so as to enable a man to do by a succession of efforts what he could not do by a single effort. The force thus obtained by an expenditure of time can be stored away and kept for use. Thus, when you wind up your watch you store away in the mainspring an amount of force which will cause the watch to go for twenty-four hours.

Time can thus be changed into physical force, and that force can be stored away, to be used as it is wanted. Can time be changed into mental and moral force in a similar way? No doubt this can also be done, and is continually done. It takes place without any effort, and hardly any consciousness, in children while they are grow-

ing up, and until, as we say, they "come of age." Each day they spend gives them some additional knowledge and practical experience. As the sun each day develops the life of plants, and causes them to grow, each new day brings influences to develop the soul of children and youth. Their powers unfold, their faculties are trained, they are able to use them better. Thus time is turned into life.

There have been many treatises written on the advantages of growing old, and the blessings which God gives to age. But I do not remember having seen mentioned one which, to me, seems very great and full of satisfaction. It is this: that as life goes on it becomes so much more rich in friendships and half-friendships, in persons whom we know well or know a little. When we are young we can go from Boston to Florida, and not meet a soul we know. This makes traveling lonely. When we are older, we cannot go anywhere without encountering some one we have seen or known in some part of our life, and whom we are glad to see again. We talk of the past days when we were together, or compare notes as to what we think and do now. Thus the world seems more rich and full. Thus, simply by continuing to live, one finds himself in relations with friends or organizations in every place. When I look at the map and see the States of Ohio, of Michigan, of Pennsylvania, of Kentucky, of Missouri, I do not see merely the names of towns

and rivers, but there rises in my mind the recollection of old friends, of familiar homes, of hospitable dwellings which received me years ago; of good men and women fighting a good fight still, all at work to make the world better. Thus the empty map is filled with pictures of kindly faces, generous and noble human beings, large activities of life and thought.

As we advance in life, the memory—that receptacle of inexhaustible capacity—becomes more full of facts and thoughts. These are ready to appear when called upon. We talk of the garrulity of age. An old man often talks a great deal, but it is because he has so much to say. One thing suggests another; every event is associated with numerous similar events in his experience. A moment ago his mind was empty; now, one word arouses a multitude of latent memories. They spring up as, in "The Lady of the Lake," the clansmen sprang up at the whistle of Roderick Dhu.

> "That whistle garrisoned the glen
> At once with full five hundred men."

A young man, preparing to write a speech, often finds his mind as blank as the paper before him. He cannot think of anything to say. But when years have come and gone, thoughts and illustrations come trooping in very rapidly. This is a common experience. Past observation and past study fill the intellect with material

for future work. Many young men make the mistake in youth of asking too curiously the use of this or that study. They neglect many opportunities of knowledge because they cannot see the use of it. I would say to young persons that all knowledge is likely to come of use, sooner or later, and often in the most unforeseen ways. Some kinds of information, no doubt, are more useful than others. But everything we see, and notice, so as to fix it in our memory, feeds the mind and comes up inevitably hereafter to help us in some emergency. Time is changed into life whenever we learn anything. But to learn it really, we must make our study radical and thorough, not superficial. We must learn to attend to what we see and hear, for inattention is the bane of knowledge.

To learn to attend, to observe, to notice what is around us, changes time into life. Attention to what is immediately before the mind, to the exclusion of all else, is a great art. Many of us pay only a half-attention to what we see and hear. Then we do not remember it. Traveling in new countries is useful as calling out the faculty of observation. The traveler feels it his business to notice everything, and often while abroad, is interested in what he has seen at home, but has not noticed there.

Another form of life is energy in action, and ability to accomplish work. The progress of years often continues and increases this ability.

Although middle life seems to be the best time for work, it is surprising to see how many old men have been distinguished as statesmen, soldiers, lawyers, merchants, physicians, writers. To-day, the destinies of Europe are in the hands of three or four old men. John Quincy Adams was sixty-four years old when he entered Congress, and the seventeen years of his life which followed were the most wonderful part of his career. Benjamin Franklin was seventy years old when he went as American ambassador to the court of France, and became the first diplomatist in Europe. He was eighty-two when he became a member of the convention which formed the American Constitution, and he did some of the best work of his life in that body. Such facts are curious, and show that while age takes away so much from the active power of man, by diminishing his nervous energy, it sometimes makes up for it by long-trained habits, practical skill and tried judgment. A man ought to grow wise as he grows old, and what is wisdom but practical judgment, ripened by experience? In some rare instances, such, for example, as that of Dr. Franklin, this becomes a sort of intuition, or divination, and realizes the truth of Milton's statement, that

> "Old experience may attain
> To something of prophetic strain."

But, though most of us are not meant to grow

up into wise judges, great statesmen or keen diplomats, we can use the faculties trained by many years of labor, each in his own department, and thus continue to do some good work to the last. So time is changed into life by accumulated force of practical wisdom.

God has blessings for all the decades of human life,—for youth, manhood, age. To a young person, an old one may seem a pitiable object; but when age comes, it brings with it numberless blessings and compensations. The heats of youth have passed by,—its vague hopes, its inordinate ambitions, its wild efforts. "Youth," says Schiller, "launches from the shore with a fleet of a hundred vessels. Age arrives, rescued from shipwreck on a single boat." But age is calm, trusting, hopeful, satisfied. The peace of God enters the soul as we grow old. I remember going with John Andrew to pass the night in the house of Francis P. Blair. Blair had been one of the most virulent and best-hated politicians of the days of General Jackson. His life had been full of storms, hot with bitter controversies. I found the old man and his wife seated by a wood fire, tranquil and peaceful, filled with good-will to all mankind. Is not age a blessing when it tranquillizes thus the heats of manhood? The long day, full of work, draws to an end. The Lord gives to its sunset no gray hue, but a tender, rosy beauty, indicating a bright dawn to come.

As we live, if we have had any simple tastes, these continue to fill the soul with peaceful joy. He who has learned to love nature in his youth enjoys her beauty and blessing to the last hour of life. She never grows old. Her unwrinkled countenance is fresh as on creation's day. She is like Christ in this, that, having loved her own, she loves them even to the end. Every spring which comes to us has a charm before unknown. It is a new miracle of God, a new coming down of divine life into the world. The long summer hours, the multitudinous foliage, the soft clouds drifting over the sky, the immeasurable smile of ocean, the "deep's untrampled floor," the mountain rising like a cloud of incense from the earth, the wild forest, the tender flowers,—the charm of these is never worn out, never tires. So, too, the love of music, of poetry, is ever fresh, ever joy-giving.

One is never too old to read, to learn. The wonderful discoveries of science, the explorations which have taught us of the marvelous beauties and wonders of our own country,—Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona; the travels which give us pictures of China and Japan, the Himalaya Mountains, the monks of Mt. Athos, the heart of Africa; how interesting to visit these scenes while sitting at the fireside and reading a good book of travels. How interesting to assist at the discovery of the sources of the Nile; to cross the continent with Stanley; to

go to New Zealand or Australia without fatigue or exposure. How interesting to be with Dr. Schliemann when he discovers where Troy stood, and opens the treasury of Mycenæ. It is curious to think that we know more about Egypt than Herodotus; more about ancient Hellas than Cicero; more about early Rome than Livy, and more about the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchies than the seven wise men of Greece. And now we find similar antiquities in our own country, buried cities in Yucatan and Arizona.

Years give us a growing enjoyment in knowledge. When we are young we seek knowledge, perhaps sometimes with a little personal feeling—a desire to excel in our attainments. When we are old, we enjoy knowledge for its own sake. It passes into our life. It becomes a part of the soul. We go back into history, and read the story of the ancient Brahmins; we read about Buddha and Confucius, about life in ancient Egypt, about the Christians in the Catacombs; and in all we find the same humanity which throbs around us to-day. I lately read some of the letters of the younger Pliny, a charming book, which shows us that, amid all the luxury, all the cruel ambitions of imperial Rome, there were multitudes of happy homes, wise and good fathers and mothers, warm friendships, pure women, and honest men. Thus history becomes a part of our own life. Of Henry More it is said that he had such an immoderate thirst for knowledge

that his tutor asked him why he studied so hard. He replied, "That I may know." "But why do you wish to know?" "I wish to know, that I may know." "For," adds More, "even then the knowledge of natural and divine things seemed to bring me the greatest imaginable joy." The desire to know the truth and to do good must both be disinterested in order to be satisfactory.

The years also teach to most well-intentioned persons a deeper religion, a truer faith. How many old men I have known, who in early life were somewhat narrow and bigoted, zealous for forms or ceremonies, who as they grow old go deeper down, and pass from the religion of the letter to that of the spirit. I think the same change came over the Apostle Paul. In his earlier espistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians he discusses doctrines with much energy. But in those which were written towards the end of his life, during his imprisonment at Cæsarea; the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians; these discussions cease, and they overflow from beginning to end with gratitude to God, love to Christ, inward peace, spiritual aspiration, tranquil submission, and inward joy.

I think that if we have a sincere desire to know and to serve God, the years change our religion into life. We cease to harass ourselves or others much about mere questions of dogma or sect. A very few central truths sat-

isfy us. Trust in God, love to man, are enough. Our prayers cease to be formal, and become a habit of the soul—waiting on God, looking to him for strength, dwelling in his infinite peace. Our faith in Christ turns to love. What to us are questions about his nature, whether supernatural or not, about his transcendental or primæval being? We know that our joys and our sorrows touch his heart; that when we wrong man, we wrong him; when we help man, we help him. We all, in our different phases, still look to him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We learn to see in Jesus not Master and Lord only, but tender Brother and blessed Friend. We obey him best when we are true to what is right and good.

"Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee."

So Christianity becomes a reality and a part of our life. It ceases to be profession, but is strength and peace. The outward part may perish, but the inward part is renewed day by day.

Thus the years as they pass on are changed into life, partly by God's providence, and without any effort of ours. It is done by a law of our nature. God has so made us that, while we grow old in one way, we grow young in

another way; while we are becoming more weak in body, we grow more strong in spirit. That is the natural tendency of things if we do not oppose it by our own wilfulness. If we accept patiently and trustingly what comes to us from God, there comes with it an inward strength and peace. What we have to add on our part is trust, submission, fidelity. Let us be loyal to our work, whatever it is; whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with our might. Let us forget the things behind—disappointment, sorrow, the unkindness of others, remorse over ourselves. Leave them behind and reach out to things before—to deeper knowledge, larger usefulness, purer love. And so, while the outward man perishes, the inward man will be renewed day by day.

One of the most convincing arguments for immortality is the undying appetite of the soul for knowledge, love, progress. As we approach the term of life, it never occurs to us that it is time to fold our arms, close our eyes, and bid farewell to nature, poetry, art, friendship, business. As long as our faculties permit, we take exactly the same interest in life, as if we were to live fifty years longer.

Therefore, we come at last to think nothing about dying, but more and more about living. We do not desire to die in order to go to God, for God is with us here on this side as much as on the other. He teaches us that he, the

Infinite Presence, the boundless Tenderness, whose joy is to pour himself out in nature as a ceaseless Creator, to make his myriad creatures full of gladness here, is the same God who will be with us there. What matters it, when we cross the line which divides this world from the next. It is only an imaginary line, like that which divides two States of our union. We pass from Massachusetts into New Hampshire and do not know it, for there is the same scenery around, the same sky above, the same sort of people, speaking the same language. So it will be, I think, when we pass into the other life, for there will be the same God above, and the same soul within; the same beauty around in nature, work to do, objects of knowledge, loving hearts, benign friendships, and eternal progress. Therefore, we keep up our activities to the end; and, though the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.

V

THE GENUINE PRAYER

"The Lord said to Ananias, arise, and go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth!"— Acts ix. 11.

What was there remarkable in this fact? Paul had often prayed before, no doubt, for all religious men, Jews and heathen, prayed; and Paul was zealous in his religion as a Jew. But perhaps, though he had often before meant to pray, had gone through the form of prayer, now, for the first time in his life, he really prayed in spirit and truth. Let me illustrate this.

There are moments of sudden illumination, in which we see in a new light and feel in another way what we have all our life been hearing and saying. For the first time we come in contact with reality. We have been using words: now we see the very things we have been talking about.

A man living far inland comes to see the ocean for the first time. He has heard about it always, and thinks he knows well enough what it is. But the report is one thing, the reality another. He stands, perhaps, on the rocks at Nahant or Cape Ann. He sees the immense surges withdrawn and uplifted, sees them rolling in in long

green masses, and then breaking in fury and foam, and rushing up in a thousand forms upon the black rocks. The rocks disappear in the tumultuous agitation. Then the water falls away, to return again directly in a new uproar of passionate struggle. He has heard of the ocean with the hearing of the ear; but now his eyes sees it, and it is another thing.

He who, for the first time, sees a mountain or sees Niagara, is lifted into another sphere. These grand and lovely forms take possession of his soul. The mountain, in its solemn majesty, exalts his inmost being. He communes with God in the universe. His lips are mute: he does not pray in words, but the sense of God's greatness overflows his mind. The soul rises to heaven, and forgets earth. This is a true prayer; and we may say of one, in such an hour, "Behold, he prayeth!"

The first sight of death affects us in the same way. Some dear friend whom we have always known and loved, with whom we took sweet counsel, who was always ready to sympathize with our feelings, to advise, to warn, to help us, one who entered into the deepest places of our life, lies calm and still before us. We look into that awful mystery and say: "Oh that those lips had language! Speak to me my friend: tell me where you have gone, what you see! Let me comprehend the 'passion of that peace.'" In such an hour we rise out of things seen into

those unseen. We forget our low cares and selfish aims. We commune with the realm of spirits, beyond time and space. We enter into the presence of the living God; and, though no words come from our lips, we are in the spirit, and it may be said of us, "Behold, he prayeth!"

The essential thing in prayer is to feel the presence of the Infinite and Unseen. Whatever takes us up there, out of our finite earthly thoughts, makes us pray. To say our prayers is not to pray. Prayer is not the act of the lips, but the condition of the soul.

I suppose that Saul had prayed regularly, all his life, at the regular hours of prayer,—the sixth, ninth, twelfth. He had devoted a large portion of his time to saying his prayers, according to the approved Pharisaic ritual. But at last the hour came when his whole soul was moved to its centre by the sight of the heavenly face of Jesus. He knew then that his past life had been a mistake. He had been zealous for all legal forms and ceremonies, devoted to the worship in the Temple. He had fasted twice in a week. He had been exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He thought himself a very religious man: others thought so, too. When he stood by, and looked into the face of Stephen, overflowing with divine peace, he knew that he was somehow wrong. But pride and passion and habit made

him go on. He continued to persecute the Christians, until, on his way to Damascus, the great light shone around him, and the sweet voice spoke to his soul; and now he arose another man, and began to pray, for the first time in his life, the prayer of a little child.

The essential thing in prayer is that it shall be real,—not a form, a decency, a ceremony, but a genuine outflow of the finite heart to the infinite heart. For this purpose the genuine prayer must be the prayer of faith, not the prayer of form.

Forms, no doubt, are good and useful. It is very well for a little child to learn to say its prayers. It is well for a church, while in its infancy, to say its prayers. But, then, we must remember always that the prayer of form is only a step in the direction of the genuine prayer. It is not yet the Christian prayer in spirit and truth.

"When ye pray," said Jesus, "use no vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye like to them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." But the Christian Church has forgotten these words of Jesus. The Greek and Roman churches, which compose the largest part of the Christian body, continue to repeat their "Kyrie Eleëson," their "Pater Noster," and their "Ave

Maria" over and over, hundreds of times a day, as though the repetition of the prayer would make it reach the throne of God.

The Protestant Church has generally, though not always, taken a higher view of prayer. It has believed, with Montgomery that

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered or unexpressed;
> The motion of a hidden fire
> Which trembles in the breast."

It is the ascent of the soul to God; it is "the flight of one alone to the Only One."

First of all, then, in prayer is the sense of a divine presence; the consciousness of a divine power, wisdom, and love above all, through all, and in us all. Nature without this all-pervading sense of Deity is cold and dead. Life without it has no sufficient aim and purpose. Sorrow and disappointment without it have no secure consolation. Without it there is no unity in the world, no meaning in existence. Without it science itself would soon lose its interest; for why study the facts and laws of a universe which came from nothing and is going nowhere?

In the Psalms there is this very striking petition, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." The soul needs the unity which comes from devotion to something infinite, perfect, the ideal beauty and goodness of things. This unites the heart

and life, and prevents it from being wasted and distracted in the endless variety of nature.

"Those who come to God," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him." These are the two great elements of prayer,—"to believe that God is, and that he blesses those who diligently seek him." We are to believe in a divine presence, and that it is good for us to draw near to it. So we have work and faith, duty and trust, law and love, labor and rest. While we can work and do our duties easily and well, this brings contentment. We feel the presence of God in nature around, and this is one way to come near to him. When we are weary and heavy laden, when life is hard, when we have lost our way, when temptation is too strong and evil too powerful, then we pray. We cast our care on God, we lean on his loving strength. Then we feel the presence of God in the soul within; and that is another way to come near to him.

Religious people made a great mistake when they thought that they could do without work, daily work, daily duty; when they went into convents and monasteries to give their lives to prayer. We cannot pray unless we have something outside ourselves to pray about. We cannot pray for the sake of praying. We can only pray rightly when we go out of ourselves, and pray in order to work for God and man; and we

can only work rightly when we gain strength from God with which to do all things. To "pray without ceasing" does not mean to repeat over and over again the words of prayer; but it means to live and act the spirit of prayer, the spirit of trust and hope and love. It means to have the sense of God's presence and love around us at all times, so that we can turn to him at any moment and ask his help. It is to live in this spirit of faith, and so to be able to walk in the spirit of faithfulness.

Now the more thoroughly we realize the presence of God, the more natural prayer becomes. A child whose father is absent, or who is absent from his father, writes letters to him at regular intervals, often a little stiff and formal. He goes through the usual formulas at the beginning and end of his letter, gives reasons for not having written before, apologizes for his remissness, describes his health and that of the family, mentions the events that have occurred in the neighborhood; and, not knowing exactly what else to say, stops short, half-way down the second page, professing to be in great haste, and to be obliged to finish his letter suddenly on account of the closing of the mail. Now, many prayers are like these,—they are letters from a child to a distant father. They begin with formal expressions of adoration and reverence, just as children, a hundred years ago, began all their letters to their father, "Respected Sir." They

return formal thanks for the gifts of life, but not for those which they really enjoy the most. They do not usually thank God when they have had a delightful conversation, when they have read an interesting book, when they have become acquainted with a good, great man, when they have heard of a noble action, when they have been enabled to do a good action themselves. We do not usually thank God for these things, —for friendship, love, the coming of summer days or a beautiful snow-storm in winter; for those best things which are nearest to us, and lie close about our feet. Our prayers are so formal that real life does not often get into them. But Christianity is introducing the prayer of faith and love, which is like the child's talk to his father and mother when he is with them, when he tells them every little thing in his little heart, when he runs up to his mother and kisses her with no particular reason for doing it, when he finds enough to say to her, and prattles all the morning of his play-room politics and the great affairs between him and his play-fellows. And his mother listens, well pleased, to all this garrulity, and likes it, I think, much better than the formal letter written from a sense of duty, which contains everything but that for which he really cares. So I think God is not so well pleased with our stiff prayers, in which we give him formal thanks and formal reverence, as when we come to feel his presence near us all day, and

talk to him in our hearts of what we feel and think and do, trusting him, and going to him, as the child trusts its mother's love.

This is the prayer which Christianity has introduced into the world,—the prayer of truth and reality. Because spiritual, it is also true, —true to human needs and wants. In some religions only the priests offer prayers, but in Christianity all are priests. We sometimes suppose that only good people ought to pray, that God hears only the good and pious Christian. But does not the good mother wish to have all her children come to her, when they are bad as well as when they are good? Does not the good and wise father seek to keep the confidence of all his children, and have them confide to him their follies, mistakes, and wrong-doings? And is God less wise and good than we? He wishes, and Christianity teaches, that above all other things he wishes to have the sinner come to him and trust in him; and, of the two, he would rather hear the sinner's prayer than that of the saint. He wishes men "to pray everywhere,"— not at church only, not only when they are good, but everywhere. He bends from heaven, and listens for the first faint whisper of penitence,— the first stammered prayer of the negro slave, of the Hindu pariah, of the outcast daughter of sin in the freezing streets of some roaring Babylon. As the mother comes and bends by night over her sick and sleeping child, all un-

conscious of her presence, so the Lord comes and looks on us with tenderest pity when we think nothing of him. Yet sometimes the sick and sleeping child may half arouse itself, and stretch up its little drowsy arm to its mother, and put it around her neck, drawing her face close down to his, and giving her a little sleepy kiss; and the mother is well pleased. So I think that God is well pleased when we, half awakening from our drowsy sleep in sense and sin, just look up a little moment, and cry out of our heart, though it may be only a single cry of longing or one unuttered whisper of vague hope.

It often may happen that the incoherent and troubled prayer of those low down in life may have more reality about it than that of the learned pulpit, which flows glibly from lips so accustomed to pray that it has become a piece of routine. I used to hear, in former days, negro prayers which often had this profound sincerity about them, so that they brought tears and smiles together while we listened to them. Thus I remember that an old negro prayed in 1862, at a freedmen's meeting in Washington: "O Lord, bress de Union army: be thou their bulwarks and ditches. O Lord, as thou didst hear our prayer when we were down in de Souf country, as we held de plow and de hoe in de hot sun, so hear our prayer now for de Union army. Guard 'em on de right and de leff and in de rear: don't leave 'em alone."

And do you remember the story which Miss Botume told us of her old colored friend, who had just succeeded in building a little cabin to shelter his family, when it was burned down? All he said, as he looked on the ruin of his hopes, was, "If it is Him will, it ought to be my pleasure; and it shall be." I am sure some of you will remember that, for I recollect that you immediately sent down enough to build another and better house than the one which was burned. So that simple prayer of patient submission to the divine will was answered through you. God sent you to answer Smart Washington, just as he sent Ananias to answer Paul.

Fortunate, thrice fortunate, are those who can believe in this infinite presence of perfect love, around them, above them, and within their very soul. Blessed, thrice blessed, are those who have learned by experience that there is always an answer to every sincere prayer,—an answer which comes, by some divine law, not necessarily in outward events, but in inward strength, knowledge, and peace. Blessed are those to whom this vast universe is not a dreary desert, but the house of a heavenly Father, in which are many mansions, suitable to all the needs of all his children. Blessed are those who, while they believe in universal, unchanging law, see in this majestic order of nature an endless adaptation to the wants of all, and whose hearts tend upward to God by a steady outflow of trust, hope, and

love. This is the prayer of faith, which is never without an answer.

When one who has all his life prayed only the prayer of form, at last opens his real soul to God, the spirits in heaven may say to each other with joy, "Behold, he prayeth!" When the worldly man, hardened in outward routine, is moved by some deep experience to pray, there may be joy in the presence of the angels of God. When the good man who hast tried hard to do his duty, but only in his own strength, feels the need of some higher help, it may add something even to the joy of heaven. And this prayer may be answered, as Paul's prayer was answered. The Lord answered Paul's prayer by sending Ananias to him, to comfort and teach him. Some blessed human sympathy may be the answer which God sends to our prayer, some kindly human love, some unexpected word of human counsel. When we are moved, we know not why, to say a word of encouragement or do some good action, perhaps the Lord is making us his mediator to answer the secret prayer of one of our human brethren. Let us, then, not resist such influences, but go, as Ananias went to Paul, and say, "Brother, the Lord has sent me to thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight." Or, if we do not say this, which in our case might seem a little presumptuous, let us be willing to be led by the spirit of God, to become his agents for good in the world.

VI

THE HOUSE OF GOD, AND THE GATE OF HEAVEN

"Lo! God is here, and I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God, and this the gate of heaven."— GENESIS 28. 16.

JACOB was on his journey to the land of his forefathers, near the head of the Euphrates, to find for himself a wife among his kinsfolk. With that singular union of piety and adroitness which has never been uncommon in the world, he had cheated his brother out of the blessing which he was pious enough to think important. The result was that he must leave his home and dwell at a distance till the anger of the fiery but placable Esau had passed by. The first night of his journey he spent on the summit of the ridge of hills, the back-bone of Palestine, the water-shed dividing the streams which flow easterly into the Dead Sea from those which turn to the west toward the Mediterranean. On that lonely and bare summit the great slabs of detached rock were around him as they lie there to-day. To the east lay in sight the valley of the Dead Sea; to the west, the silver line of the Mediterranean. The character of Jacob, as it appears in the artless narrative, with all its faults,

was one of strong affections. The man of whom we are told that he "served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed but a day, for the love he had to her," must have felt homesick that night on the bleak summit which was to separate him from his blind old father, his mother Rebekah, and the old well where the Philistines had taken the oath of peace, whence the place had received the name of Beer-Sheba, "the Well of the Oath."

Strange dreams came to Jacob that night. He saw the mighty stairway binding together earth and heaven, of which all the ancient mythologies have dreamed. He saw the Angels of Pity going up the ladder, bearing the needs and prayers of man to the throne of mercy; he saw the Angels of Grace descending along the luminous highway, bringing the influences and bounties of heaven to earth. Perhaps in that brilliant sky, before he fell asleep, the arch of the Milky Way had impressed itself upon his imagination like an enormous bridge, its abutments resting on the horizon, and its lofty centre in the depths of heaven. And there, in his dream, Jehovah seemed to stand among the stars and utter in his ear the sublime but mysterious promise that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. The God of Abraham and of Isaac then was there. He was not, like the gods of the Canaanites, local; not a God dwelling in one mountain only—Mount Olympus, Mount Meroz,

in one sacred grove, or among the tents of a single tribe. "He is here, and I knew it not," says Jacob. "How dreadful is this place! This is his house, though no temple is here, no altar, no shrine. This is the gate of heaven. We can go to God from this spot, too, though here is no priest, no sacrifice, no ceremony to open the way. There is a gateway opening into heaven, wherever we may be." So he set up stones, and poured on them the sacred oil, and called the place Bethel, or the house of God; and it has been a sacred place with the Jews, Mohammedans and Christians till now.

The experience of Jacob is constantly repeating itself in human history. We suppose God's house is only in one place; we find him dwelling in many places. We suppose there is only one way to reach him; we learn that there are many ways.

We call the temple which human hands have built the house of God. It is natural for man to build such temples, and when they are sanctified by the worship of many generations, the walls saturated with hymns and prayers; when the whole community has contributed to their erection; when pious hands have carved and laid every stone; when the builders have "wrought in a sad sincerity,"—then these great structures, soaring to the skies, shed a sacred awe over the spot where they stand. Even the New England meeting-house, which our fathers placed on the hill-top,

with its simple spire sending a call to prayer over the peaceful village in the quiet Sunday morning, seems to sanctify the place. The most prosaic village takes on something of the ideal when the shops and cottages and schools cluster around the church. New York, with its roaring tides of population, its extremes of misery and luxury, its tumult of business, seems not wholly given over to the world while it builds so many houses for worship and prayer. I have sat, on a Sunday morning, in Westminster Abbey or Notre Dame; I have stood at night among the worshippers in the Antwerp Minster and the Cathedral at Genoa. I, a stranger from another land, looking up at those soaring arches, those innumerable columns, the house of God through so many generations, felt no more a stranger, felt at home. And these great majestic buildings seemed to make the whole place holy, helping us to realize the presence of God in the hearts of his children. It is natural that the church should seem more the house of God than other places, and that early religious impressions should be made in it.

But there are other places beside the church which we find to be the gate of heaven. There comes a time in which other places become sacred too, and in which we say of nature, of history, of science, of art, of faithful work, of pure affection, of the world, of life, of death, and of everything God has made or sent to us, "Lo!

God is here also, and I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."

Did you ever have a serious conversation with a friend, when you talked earnestly of life, its duties and aims; of the soul and its aspirations; of your own struggles, trials and hopes? You were perhaps walking beneath the stars, which sent their rays from the depths of the solemn vault of night, lifting you away from the transient prejudices and passions of time to the realities of eternity. You may not, in that hour, have used religious phrases; the most religious conversations sometimes have nothing in them about religion; but you went away strengthened and refreshed. You said to yourself that you now knew better what to do and to be. God was there, though you did not know it, and that place was to you "none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

The places in all the earth which were the most like the gate of heaven were those where Jesus walked and talked with his friends and the people. He sometimes went into the Temple, but oftener he spoke to them by the lake shore, from the side of the mountain, in the synagogue, in the house of the publican, in the streets and the highways. When Jesus sat by the well of Jacob and talked with the woman of Samaria, and said to her, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,"

that place became the house of God and the gate of heaven. When, at the wedding feast of Cana, he showed that his gospel was at one with all natural joy, that wedding feast became the house of God. When he told the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, though the people may have thought they were only listening to an interesting story, they were hearing the noblest sermon, and were unconsciously standing at the gate of heaven. By the grave of Lazarus, when Jesus uttered the words which abolished death and said that no one with faith in his heart could die, that was the gate of heaven. The magnificent Temple stood blazing with gold and marble in the summer air, the troops of priests, in their robes, were offering sacrifices, choirs of Levites chanted the rolling chorus of triumphant Psalms. But which was most truly the house of God, that place with its solemn rites and awful forms, or the little group of Jesus and his disciples, walking over the Mount of Olives to the village of Bethany, and talking as they went of the kingdom of heaven?

God is all around us; he is everywhere near us, but we do not know it. Sometimes he withdraws the veil and speaks to our heart, and we say, "This is the gate of heaven." Sometimes he touches our soul with the beauty of the inflowing or departing year, we see him for a moment in the hazy light of the far horizon, in the glories streaming up into the sky from the setting sun,

in the tumult of white waves on the shore, in the solemn hills, and the mountain white with eternal snow, which wrestles with the darkness all the night, and shines rosy in the early day. Sometimes we hear God's voice in these, and they are to us the gate of heaven.

When Milton sat in his obscurity and blindness in London and the music of his wonderful song came to him, a celestial light shining inward and giving eyes to his soul, that undying strain was an open gateway to heaven. Poetry, in the soul of Milton, Dante, Wordsworth became the house of God, a church where we can go to worship in spirit and truth. When we read these great works of genius we seem to be standing in the aisles of a vast Gothic minster. The first and only time I read the "Paradise Lost" from beginning to end, and saw the strength of pinion which bore the poet on and on, never resting, never hastening, painting heaven and earth and hell; angels and devils, man and woman; the horrors of despair below, the sweetness of Paradise above; I felt as if I could say, "This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." And so when I read the Book of Job, and saw the mighty struggles of the soul in that great poem, the battle of truth and sophistry, it also seemed the house of God.

So, too, science, when it opens the way to truth, is the gate of heaven. Astronomy and geology, which were once thought to be infidel

sciences, now elevate our conception of the power and wisdom of God, showing how he reaches out his hand through awful distances of space and inconceivable periods of duration. We say, as we stand in the presence of these great discoveries of science, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God."

So also we find God near us in our daily life. There are hours of faithful work which bring us near to him and seem to open the gates of heaven. Pure peace comes into the heart which is simple, honest, true—the peace of God, which passes all understanding. Difficulty, trial, disappointment are also ladders leading upward to the skies. The hour of love, when the heart is full of a perfect rest, when all things seem fresh and fair, when we see a new heaven and a new earth—this purifies the soul, and is the gate of heaven. In the hour of bereavement also, when the dearest ones are taken away, when we stand by the companion of our life, the child of our affection, and see life ebbing away minute by minute, and can do nothing to hold back our loved one for a single moment, we sometimes feel a divine presence—we are lifted away from earth, and say, "God is here! This is his house! This is the gate of heaven!"

And how often do we find God near to us in the depths as in the heights! When we seem most empty and poor, most helpless in ourselves, when the temptation to evil is the strongest, when

we have lost our way in life, and feel as if it were better to die than to live, and, better than both, never to have been born; when sin seems too powerful to be resisted and evil habit binds us like an iron chain; when we have become discouraged and have lost all hope; when it seems to be of no use to try to be good men or good women, and we are ready to yield ourselves servants to the world, slaves to selfishness, slaves to the devil,—even then sometimes God comes and speaks to us, and puts new life and hope in our heart. Why not? Jesus tells us that he came to seek and save the lost, and we, then, are among the lost. He leaves the ninety and nine righteous and goes to find the sinner. Those who are afar off he makes nigh; those who are without hope, for them he dies. So that often, out of the blackest despair, comes the sweetest hope; out of the sense of utter emptiness, the fullness of a new life. Among the stories of the Gospel, one of the most touching is that of the woman who came in when Jesus was sitting at meat with the Pharisee and stood behind him weeping. You remember how it was. The Pharisee thought it improper for her to come so near Jesus. She was not a good woman. Simon, who gave the feast, thought this a proof that Jesus was not a prophet, after all. If he had been so, he would have known that the woman was a sinner. Then Jesus explained to him that her overflowing love showed that, though a great sinner, she had

greatly repented, and had been greatly forgiven. "She loved much, for she has been forgiven much." The evangelists have not told us when and where Jesus had found her and blessed her with the sight of God's forgiving love. That conversation is one of the many that remain unrecorded. But, wherever it took place, it was to her the gate of heaven.

Jesus brought souls to God; he wished to raise them out of the fear of God into the love of God. He knew that nothing in this world creates such a trusting, childlike love for God as first to feel the depth of our sin, and then to feel that because Christ is really like God, therefore God feels as Christ felt, and that God and the angels care for us most when we think that we have gone so far away that they do not care for us at all.

In the sweet autumn days there often comes a sort of revival of the year, and it is the prophecy of the universal revival of all human souls. We all must believe in revivals. We object to such revivals only as are the work of man, not those which come from God. There are moments when souls are more tender, more thoughtful, more impressible than at other times.

So, too, the spring is a revival, and becomes to us the type of the divine revival; not exclusive, but including all things, every weed, every flower. Each plant is touched in its order: some are so late in coming out we think they

are dead; when everything else is green they are still bare. Thus some souls are very slow in coming to God; they linger long. They may need sharper discipline than others; outer darkness, the worm that does not die, the fire of remorse and anguish bitter and long. Who knows how much or how long? They are like comets, which wander off into the infinite depths, the frozen solitudes of outer darkness, where the sun becomes only like one of the stars, and the poor comets seem forever lost. There they appear to stand alone in that outer darkness little misty specks, their planetary personality gone; they seem to have escaped even from the reach of the universal law of gravitation. But though they stay there for hundreds or thousands of years, yet they are not forgotten by God. He sends Attraction, his mighty archangel of love, to these lost children of the solar system, to bring them back again to the all-embracing sun. They may go away again if they will, but neither star nor soul can escape from God's truth and God's love. "If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." Theologians have sometimes told us that God goes away, taking his saints with him, and leaving the devils and sinners together in hell. David was wiser; he says that God is in the hells as well as in the heavens; that no part of the universe can escape from his infinite wisdom, power and love. "If I make my bed in hell thou art there also."

Thus it is that at first religion was local, and God seemed to be found only at some special shrine, church, creed or altar. We must go over the sea to Rome to find him; we must go to some church to find him; we must wait till we are holy and pious before we can find him. But by degrees, as we read the gospel of Christ, we see that God's word is very nigh to us, in our mouth and heart; that his word comes down upon us like rain and dew from heaven, and returneth not thither; that neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem shall men worship the father; that the whole world is the house of God and the gate of heaven; that all nature, all history, all experience, all joy and sorrow, all life and death, success and failure, sin and pardon—these are all gateways which may lead us, if we will, to God. Wherever peace and love are, there is his house and home.

Thus is God here when we do not know it. How much more is he here when we do know it. It is a great blessing to know God by seeing that we are known of him. Let us hope, my friends, that our worship in this house will help us so to know God that we shall find him not only here but in all our path and our lying down, all our work and recreation, and the whole of our human life be to us none other than the house of God and gate of heaven.

VII

HOMES IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."— EPH. iii. 15.

"In my Father's house are many mansions."— JOHN xiv. 2.

IN these two passages the existence of the family and of the home is spoken of as a fact of universal law, belonging to both worlds, this world and that which is to come. There will be a family in heaven, as there is a family on earth. We shall have homes in heaven, as we have homes here. The essence of the home will be the same, though the circumstance may differ. These families and homes in heaven will correspond to those on earth, though of a higher, deeper, and larger type.

What is the essence of the home? A home is some habitual surrounding, abiding-place,—something into which we can go for rest, peace, safety. We go from our home every day for work, for observation, intercourse with others: we return to it to rest with what is familiar and dear. As man ascends in the scale of development, he does not need a home less, but more. He changes his tent to a hut, his hut to a house,

his house of logs or boards for one more permanent, meant to endure, better provided with all things adapted to his tastes and habits and to those of his household. This is a striking fact, that man needs a home more and not less, the more he unfolds his powers, and comes in contact with the universe and with men. The growth of man does not transform him into a homeless being, wandering from place to place, but creates in him a need of a better home. The home of the savage disappears in a day or a year. The civilized man builds homes which last hundreds of years. This shows that we shall probably need homes hereafter as well as here,—homes more highly developed than these, better adapted to our needs, tastes, and wants. There will be homes in heaven as on earth.

The same thing may be said of the family. As man advances here into a higher civilization, he does not need the family less, but more. The family of the savage is only in its germ. To see the family in its highest state, you must find the highest specimens of the human race. The family becomes more developed as man himself is developed. Each household becomes more united in mutual relations and mutual dependencies. We care more for all the outlying branches of the family, not less; the distant cousins and kinsfolk become dearer to us. This shows that the family, like the home, has a spiritual meaning, a

value for eternity as well as for time; something made not only to last, but to unfold into some higher and more spiritual form.

"In my Father's house," says Jesus, "are many mansions." A mansion is a house or outward sphere suited to the inward tendency of the creature. Every creature seeks a mansion adapted to its wants. Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests. Moles burrowing in the ground; ants provident of the future, building their subterranean city with its streets and lanes, its highways and byways; insects on their leaf, spiders in their web, the mollusk in his shell,—all, no doubt, have a sense of security in their many mansions. This instinct of finding or building a mansion seems almost universal. The organ of inhabitiveness rules the whole animal creation.

Man also needs his mansion, and has it. The rudest savage has his hut or cave; the roving Arab pitches his tent day by day in some new environment; at last, men build more enduring edifices, and these become the shelter of the family. The family and the home are correlated; neither can exist without the other. A house without a family is not a home, a family without a house is hardly a family.

But there are many mansions in our Father's house; many beside those built of stone and wood, brick and marble. The mind needs a mansion of belief in order to feel at home; and it builds

for itself a religious, philosophical, moral, or literary creed as naturally as the robin builds its nest. It cannot feel at rest till it has surrounded itself with some gathered and arranged opinions. It is not necessary that all these creeds should be alike. One man's creed may be a provisional one, like the Arab's tent; or a temporary one, like the log cabin of the first settlers in a new country; another may be meant to last for a thousand years, like the palace of a Venetian Doge; but some sort of a spiritual and moral belief one must have before he feels at home.

God has laid the foundation of a spiritual belief in our soul in solid convictions, which we cannot get away from; and he has given us material out of which to construct our belief. The part of our creed which God gives to us is the same in all minds: the part which we make for ourselves is different. All men believe in their identity and personal existence, and in that of an outward world; all men believe in space and time, in infinity and eternity, in cause and effect, in substance and form, in good and evil, in right and wrong. This is the solid foundation which God has himself laid in every man's reason, upon which each man may build more belief as he can. Some religious creeds are better, and some are worse; but a poor creed is better than none, just as a poor house is better than no house. The folly of the skeptic is to have no home or belief at all, because he cannot be sure that he has the

best one. He chooses to believe nothing until he can be sure about everything. This is as though I should live out of doors because I cannot decide which is the very best kind of house to live in. The meanest shanty of the poorest laborer keeps out cold and heat and storm, and stands on the solid earth. So the poorest creed is some protection to the soul, and stands on the immutable basis of some everlasting convictions. Better to believe in something divine, if it be only the divine soul in nature, than to have no religious conviction of any kind. Better be a Pantheist than an Atheist; to believe nature to be God rather than not believe at all in God. Better be a Deist than a Pantheist; and so believe in a personal intellect and will in God even if one is not a Christian. All earnest religious convictions protect the soul; and the only creed which is worse than no creed is that which confuses right and wrong, which teaches immoral views of God and man, for that tears up the God-given foundation of the house in order to build the walls. Then, when the rains descend, and the floods arise, and the winds blow, the house has no foundation, and will fall.

But the heart needs its home, too, and the home of the heart is love and friendship. The heart escapes from the selfish world—the world of struggle and competition—into a home of affection, and feels safe. We need some good will

which we can depend upon, on which we can lean at all times, in which we can safely trust. And God gives us this essential home of human love. Just as he puts a foundation of belief in every mind, he places a foundation of love in every heart. All men have some fundamental affection. Observe how little children, unless they have been very badly treated, trust in the good will of all around them. Their trust in us compels us to respond to it.

Motherly love surrounds the infant child, and makes a home for its heart. Even the worst mothers love their children, unless their hearts are wholly ulcerated with vice. Even vice itself does not usually destroy a mother's love. That affection lives pure and unspotted in the midst of evil thoughts and emotions. It may have for its companions recklessness, intemperance, falsehood; but it often remains uncontaminated in the midst of this bad neighborhood. The poor heart which has sinned away all other power of pure affection can still love its child with unselfish, generous love.

But, when the motherly heart is pure, there is something divine in this affection. See the devotion with which the mother tends the helpless infant, night and day, without rest, endowed with a superhuman strength for this labor. See this love for a sick child, rising out of mere emotion into steady, perpetual, untiring, constant,

vigilant activity; suppressing anxiety, remaining calm and firm amid alarming signs, and holding on to the end, indefatigable.

Beautiful is the family. It is God's garden, in which he raises his plants. It is beautiful from its unity in variety. The sacred, invisible element of mutual love and confidence makes the serene atmosphere of the whole. It is this various life, various work, but all harmonized by a common aim and love, which makes of a family the germ of a State.

This is the true home for the child's heart,—the thoughtful, tender, wise love of father or mother: into this it runs and is safe.

As the years pass, and the children grow older, they still are always sure of this home. Other loves, which seem more fascinating and fair, may betray them: they are sure that this will never fail. Other friendships may deceive: the wise, steadfast friendship of father and mother, brother and sister, the loves born in home, and grown up and ripened there,—these may have a lesser charm than newer and later affections, but they are sure, they can always be depended on. And when death comes, and takes away the father or mother out of the home, their love remains there, a perpetual possession.

> "The love where death has set his seal,
> Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
> Nor falsehood disavow."

It now rises transfigured, with an immortal beauty and an undying glory, as a love in heaven, remaining for us there, and making heaven a better and nearer heaven for us.

The Christian Church is necessary as a home for the soul. All the criticisms levelled against it, by foes and friends, are aimed only at its forms, not at its essence. The essence of a Christian church is that "two or three shall meet together in the name of Christ." The essence of its worship is that they "shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." And this need of Christian communion and Christian worship will never pass away. Man needs society in his religious life, his religious thoughts, his religious action, and this makes his church. The more the church is like a family and a home, the nearer it is to its original type. The building of wood or stone is not the church. Jesus and his disciples had no church edifice to worship in; nor did Christians have any for three hundred years. Ritual, ceremony, music, sacraments,—these are not its essence. Its essence is mutual Christian sympathy, thought, and action. The more a church is like a family, and the more its building is like a home, the nearer it comes to its true type.

Such are the homes of earth. There are homes in heaven. There must be a family life in heaven corresponding to that below. Jesus said: "I go to prepare a *place* for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and

receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." This does not seem as though the other world consisted of one homogeneous assembly of souls, all in the same place; or of separate souls, each going its own way. Rather it looks as if there were to be families of souls there, each in its home; groups of souls there, drawn together by their different affinities; many mansions there, as there are many mansions here; societies and companies of those of like affinities, like tastes, like convictions and purposes; places prepared beforehand for us, where we shall find wiser, larger, tenderer souls waiting to teach us, to care for us, just as little children come into homes here where older and wiser persons are ready to receive them. We shall become as "little children" again when we enter that sphere. We shall have motherly and fatherly, brotherly and sisterly spirits to receive us and care for us. These are the intimations of Scripture, the suggestions of reason, the inferences from analogy, and the hopes born out of Christian faith.

The homes in heaven, like the homes on earth, will no doubt contain souls in different degrees of progress. As in our homes here we have the aged, the infant, the child, the youth, and those in mature life, so in the homes hereafter there will be united around a common centre and in one group, higher and lower souls,—some old in spiritual wisdom and some childlike in their insight and infantile in their development. Harmony

always implies variety. Each celestial group will be a harmony of those in various degrees of progress and attainment,—the angelic teachers and the humbler souls longing to be taught.

In our earthly homes there are often joined together those who have no real union of taste or aim or conviction. But in the heavenly home we may believe that the one bond of union will be a common faith and hope and love, sympathy in the same purpose, longing for the same ends.

I often meet with those or hear of those who are unhappy because they doubt if they are to see again and know again in another world those whom they love here. I have never had any such doubts or fears myself. What sort of an immortality would it be in which we should forget all we knew in this world? And, if we remember anything, what shall we be more likely to remember than that which makes the most important part of our earthly life? To leave behind and drop off all our present knowledge would not be immortality, but the death of our present character and the creation of another being. The law of life is development, not destruction; unfolding of what we are now into something higher, but not dropping off anything important or leaving it behind.

The apostle tells us that while opinions change, and belief is partial, three things will abide,—Faith, Hope and Love. Faith, which is trust in things unseen, confidence in the infinite, the su-

preme Good,—this continues through all worlds. Hope, looking forward and upward; aspiration toward the better and the higher; Hope, the spring of progress, the moral power which causes the soul to unfold forever, seeking perpetually a higher good,—this will last through all worlds. But most of all will Love last,—love, which enables us to go out of ourselves and become one with another; love, which is the balance and counterpoise to the loneliness of personal being; love, which mysteriously makes of two souls one. If we did not love others whom we have seen, we could not love God whom we have not seen. Therefore, we may be sure that every genuine affection will abide, and continue the same hereafter as here, and heaven would be no heaven if it destroyed the genuine loves of earth.

I have often noticed that as men grow feeble with age, or draw near to death, while the other faculties become weaker, the affections survive. Memory goes, the power of thought goes,—the strong thinker becomes a child again in his mental processes; the man of energy and will loses his power, his courage: but Love abides. The affections outlast reason, judgment, memory, imagination. A sweetness of ever-growing love draws the dying man nearer to his dear ones. He loves to hold their hands in his, to look into their eyes when he can no longer speak, with a great effort to say, "I love you." His last word, last thought, last look, last touch, is a word, thought,

look, touch of love. Does not this show that these affections are to survive death?

When Jesus was about to die, we read that, having loved his own, he loved them even to the end. He gave his last hours and thoughts to these humble friends, to this family of those most dear to his human heart. For a few hours he dropped the care for his nation, which he loved so much, of the coming kingdom so dear to him, the truth for which he was about to die, and devoted himself to consoling this group of affectionate but ignorant followers. Weak as water, they would soon all forsake him and fly. No matter: he had seen in their souls the seed of an enduring goodness and greatness, and he gave his last hours to care for them. He told them that among the many mansions of his Father's house he was going to prepare a place for them, that where he was they might also be. Think of this, ye doubting, timid hearers, who fear you will be left behind by those you love in the great progress of heavenly life, afraid that you will not be good enough to accompany the friends so dear to you into a higher world. Were the twelve disciples good enough to be with Jesus? Think of the vast gulf which separated their minds and characters from his. But they loved him, and he loved them, and so the gulf was bridged over, and they were to be with him forever.

This shows us what the family in heaven will

be. It will not be made up of those who have reached the same level of ascent, but of those of every degree of attainment, who are related to each other by having the same faith, hope, and love. There, as here, there will be those who teach and those who learn; higher and nobler souls descending to help, purify, and sustain weaker hearts; great archangels of intelligence and goodness going down to find the lowliest beings in whom there is a single throb of sincere desire for the beautiful and the true. This divine giving and receiving, blessing and being blessed, will make the home life of heaven.

Nor are we to suppose that the soul hereafter is to be pure spirit, disengaged from all bodily form, going out of time and out of space. The law of continuity does not authorize us to believe in any such sudden leap out of the finite into the infinite, from time to the absence of all time.

All progress is a gradual transition, a gentle ascent, an unfolding of a new power. But what an utterly abrupt and inconceivable change would it be to become at once one with the universe, and to pass out of finite relations! No: when we go on and up, we shall in all probability, find ourselves simply a step higher, in a new home, surrounded by old and new friends, with new work to do, new knowledge to acquire, new tastes unfolding, and with a new and higher sense of the divine Presence and the divine Love. There are hours in this life in which we draw very near to

God, and in which he becomes to us a real Father and Friend. There, these hours may be permanent and continued: Love an unerring light; Joy its own security; the power of temptation gone; every human affection purified and deepened. Those whom we knew and loved here with a pure and honest love we shall know better and understand better, and we shall be better understood by them. The deep secret of Personality will be partially, but more and more revealed. We shall see others as they are. The inward tenderness and longings for good, so feeble here, we shall recognize as the power of God in their souls. The misunderstandings which make such a tragedy in life will be removed; in that heavenly light, we shall know each other better and more truly. The family will be enlarged, no doubt, and will consist not only of those who have known and loved each other here, but of others, who are in the same sympathies and the same hopes. The heavenly family will be more fully developed than that of earth, yet rudimentally the same.

The apostle tells us that the whole family, in heaven and earth, bears the name of Christ. Jesus introduced a new family tie. All who believe in him belong to a larger family here and hereafter, and he belongs to them all. Thus, as earthly society is made up of groups, and not of individuals, so life in heaven will be of groups and families. The family relation may be intensified and brightened there: special families

may be made up of kindred souls, of those having special affinity for each other, and these again may resolve themselves into larger family groups, till all unite in that universal family of which Christ is the head,—the family of man. Jesus will never be happy as long as one human soul remains outside of his family circle, as long as any race remains outcast. I think there is something very pathetic in the Jews wandering about the earth, insoluble in other races; among them, but not of them; or in the gypsy tribe wandering in the same way from land to land, without home, religion, language, a lost race, seeking apparently all over the earth for their home. But in heaven there will be no lost races, no lost churches, no lost and helpless prodigals. All will be brought home into their Father's house,—sooner or later, all. For thus stands the sure word of prophecy proclaiming the omnipotence of the love of Christ, the perfect efficacy of his redeeming grace to break every chain of sin. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "He shall reign till he hath subdued all enemies under his feet." "Every knee shall bow, in the name of Jesus, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This is the work for Jesus and his angels and saints in heaven; the work in which all the wise and good and pure shall take part

with him; the universal redemption of man; a work not to be done in a day or an hour. "In the dispensation of the fulness of times," so we read, that God our Father "might gather together in Christ all things in one, both which are in heaven and are on earth; even in him." "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, through him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether things in earth or things in heaven."

VIII

THE OLD AND NEW VIEW OF THE HEREAFTER

"And now abide these three, Faith, Hope, and Love; but the greatest of these is Love."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Paul is speaking of the time when our knowledge, which is necessarily partial, will disappear in a fuller knowledge. But our knowledge in this world and the present time must always be partial: hence, Paul is probably referring to the ages to come and to the future life. When prophecy shall cease, the supernatural element be swallowed up in a larger world of infinite law, and our knowledge—so relative, conjectural, imperfect—becomes absolute insight, there will still remain three of the present facts of human consciousness, Faith, Hope, Love. We shall carry with us into the eternal world these three elements of our present experience. There, as here, we shall live by faith; there, as here, we shall look forward in hope to something still higher than that we have attained; there, as here, we shall dwell in love, and so dwell in God.

I propose to point out the difference between the old view of the future life and the modern

view of what may be in the great and mysterious beyond.

God, for the wisest reasons, has placed a gulf between this world and the world to come. It is a part of the law of limitation which is so essential to human peace and progress. That law says, "One thing at a time." We know that there are other worlds and planets in space like our own, but what sort of life they contain we cannot know. "Study your own planet first," says the divine law. "Attend to present duties here," is its command: "when you reach the other world, you will know about that." In speaking, therefore, of the future life, we must imitate the modesty of the apostle, and say, "I know in part, and I teach only in part."

The old and new view of the hereafter differ, first, in their sources. What men have hitherto believed about the future life has been arrived at by adopting literally the figurative language of the Bible,—images of a tribunal, a judge, a trial, a sentence, followed by punishment and reward; images of a banquet, of the good collected in one place singing psalms of praise; of the wicked in another place, tormented with fire. These figures have been taken literally, and made the foundation of a whole system of belief in regard to the future life.

The new view rejects the systems based on such figures of speech. Instead, it draws its infer-

ences from the few distinct statements it finds in the words of Christ and his apostles, from the spirit of the whole gospel teaching, and from the analogies of this life. This world and this life, it argues, come from God; and we see in the facts and laws of nature the method of the divine operation. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. His laws must be the same in all worlds; and by what he does for us here we can tell something, at least, of what he will do for us hereafter. There is a gulf between our knowledge of this life and our knowledge of the other, but no gulf or separation between the character of God as shown here and his character as it will be shown there.

According to the old view, death was a terrible event which revolutionized everything. To die was to go into a world wholly different from this world; to leave this beautiful and wonderful nature, and to pass into a region of purely spiritual existence. It was the end of probation, the end of all opportunity for repentance and faith. Here, while the lamp of life continues to burn, the vilest sinner may change, and go back to God. There any such change is impossible. The moment of death decides forever and forever the condition of the soul.

Not so the view taken by the modern theology. That says, "What God is to us here he will be to us there." He punishes us here, "not for his pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be par-

takers of his holiness." If he punishes us there, it will be for the same purpose,—to discipline, purify, and elevate the soul. If, in this world, God lets his sun shine and his rain fall on the evil and the good, then in the other world he will do the same. He will make all his children as happy as they are capable of being. He will give to them all opportunities of improvement. Death, therefore, in the theology of reason, ceases to be an awful change. It is transition: it is a step forward, onward, upward. But it is probably no abrupt shock to the one who appears to us to die. To himself he only seems, I suppose, to be placed in the midst of new scenes, new friends, new occupations. We shall be no more surprised, I imagine, at finding ourselves in the other world than we were at finding ourselves in this world. Softly we were cradled into existence here: gently we shall be lifted into existence there. There, as here, we shall be in a world of surrounding beauty and wonder; there, as here, our faculties will be aroused by nature around us; there, as here, we shall find ourselves born into a home and a society; there, as here, by slow degrees we shall understand our new home and our new work.

Jesus seems to intimate this when he says, "Whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die." That is, "to one who has my faith, my spirit, who trusts in the truth I teach, there is no such thing as death. That spirit which is in

me, if it exist in you, will carry you upward and onward, will be the resurrection and the life." It is no magical influence which Jesus exercises on the soul. Faith in him is no talisman, but a moral power. It gives us the principle within by which, when we enter the next world, we shall rise to higher societies, to larger views of being, and to an ampler love.

When we seek to know what heaven is to be there, we must ask what it is here; for certainly the kingdom of heaven comes also in this world. There are hours of heavenly peace in this life. We sit sometimes in heavenly places with Jesus even now. Heaven is satisfaction, content, the peace of God which passeth understanding.

Now, this heaven below comes from the three elements which are to abide,—faith, hope, and love. Faith means the sight of the invisible reality which is below the passing appearance. It is the evidence of the reality of truth, goodness, wisdom. We endeavor to know, because we believe there is really something to be known. Faith, therefore, is the condition of knowledge. And what a joy and peace come to the soul from knowledge,—knowledge of the laws of the universe, knowledge of the divine work in history, knowledge of our capacity of improvement, knowledge of Christ as a personal friend and benefactor!

Knowledge, then, abides in the other world because faith abides,—faith, which is the substance

of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. No doubt, new varieties of knowledge, hidden arcana, occult mysteries of being, will there be opened to us. Here, we see, as in a glass, darkly; there, face to face. We may then know the nature of life, the nature of the soul, the enigma of moral freedom, the cause and reason of the existence of evil, the vast hierarchy of spiritual existence above us, all of which are hidden from us here. But, as knowledge enlarges, faith will extend itself further, and root itself more deeply in the soul. Far beyond what we know will be our trust in the unknown abysses of divine being.

And hope also will continue in the other life, and this means that there will be progress hereafter as well as here. To hope means to look forward to something better; but, unless that something better can be reached, the hope must perish. Therefore, continued hope implies continued progress. It means constant growth and development. It means ever-increasing knowledge, activity, power; ever-increasing capacity for spiritual improvement; a never ceasing ascent toward God,—powers growing more angelic, activity becoming more divine. All this is hinted at in the statement that hope abides.

If Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost, if his heavenly spirit was devoted to helping the sinful and degraded and bringing the wanderer back to his Father's house, why

may it not be a part of the work of ascended souls to labor with Christ for the redemption of this world? These angels may be all around us, these pure spirits, seeking to restrain us from evil and influence us to good. The old view of heaven was that the angels and archangels, thrones, dominions, and powers, the cherubim with many eyes, and the seraphim covered with wings to shade themselves from the light of God's presence, were occupied in giving glory to God, in singing anthems of praise, in crying, "Holy! holy! holy! Lord God of Sabaoth!" Is it not more in accordance with the spirit of the gospel of Jesus to believe that the highest spirits are occupied in helping the weakest of God's creatures; that, as their power and wisdom increase, their active, helpful love toward those below them increases also; and that the same law applies there as here,—they who humble themselves to the lowest offices of goodness shall be exalted to the highest rank in God's kingdom? And therefore we may say, as the surest of all certainties, that love will abide,—love in all its forms of pure affection, love for those who are above us in grandeur and beauty, love for those who are close beside us in sympathy and fellowship, love toward those who are most helpless and needy,—the souls which sit furthest down in darkness and the shadow of death. The highest seraphs nearest the throne of God must come to the most desperate and most forlorn.

According to the new theology, the angels and seraphs see God in his creatures. They come near to the Great Throne of Glory, not by looking up and forgetting all below, but by going with Jesus to seek and save the lost. Can Jesus be satisfied in sitting at the right hand of God in personal bliss, while his work below is still so poorly done, his church here so imperfect, his great redemption unfulfilled? When he said, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world" (or "the consummation of the age"), did not that declaration truly show that, in going up, he was not going away? People talk of Christ's second coming as though it were some far-off event. There is no second coming. Christ is always coming. He is always with us; and he comes nearer to the world by every advance in righteousness, every conquest of good over evil. Whenever any tyranny of man over man gives way, Christ comes; whenever the poor and despised are elevated, Christ comes; whenever the lowly are fed with the bread of life, Christ comes. He comes to you and me whenever we are enabled to deny ourselves and take up our cross for truth and justice. And with him also come the spirits of those who have lived for us and loved us, who still love us and live for us; for they, too, when they go up, do not necessarily go away. So the poet Spenser thought, telling us how the blessed angels leave their silver bowers to come and suc-

cor us who need their succor, planting their bright squadrons around us. Yes, he says: There is care in heaven, there is love in heavenly spirits for us poor mortals.

All this argument is founded on what we know by our experience of the essential nature of the gospel of Christ. If we know anything certainly of this great revelation through Jesus, we know it as a revelation of love. The atoning work of Jesus binds together in the golden cord of love all the creatures of God. The love of Christ constrains us to a love of humanity. Christ lived and died for all, not chiefly for the good, the pious, the virtuous, the advanced and superior souls, but for poor struggling, sinful mortals, beset by easy temptations, fighting with poor success against evil habits, longing to be better, but so discouraged, helpless, forlorn. Those who are whole need not a physician, but the sick. These helpless ones are dear to the heart of the great Master of this divine science of love. To-day, as at first, he and his must be still occupied in seeking and saving those who are lost.

In the paintings of the great artists who were inspired by the old theology, Jesus and the saints are represented as surrounding the throne of God, looking upward toward the ineffable presence of the Most High. When the new artists come, greater even than Michel Angelo and Raphael, because inspired by nobler ideas,

they will represent Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, with his apostles and prophets, his saints and martyrs, turning their faces toward man, coming down among us, blessed helpers, to share our trials, to console our sorrows, to lift us out of our sins, to fill us with a new hope and a new purpose of better living.

We often read and hear discussions on the question "whether we shall recognize our friends hereafter." How can we ever doubt it? If love abides, are we not to know those whom we love? What would immortality be if we were to go there alone, separated from all the loved ones, the knowledge of whom has made the very essence and sweetness of our human life? Would that be immortality if we left behind us the richest part of our souls? The best that is in us has come to us from love to others and their love to us. Let that perish in forgetfulness, and we should go into the other world only half alive. We should have lost the best part of the results of our earthly life. That we should be thus separated from our friends was not the view of the great Teacher. He emphasized in his last wonderful conversation with his disciples that his "going up" was not going from them. "I go away, and come to you," said he. He came nearer to them when he seemed to go. He told them: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that

where I am, there ye may be also." There are, then, societies in the other world, unions of those who are in the closest sympathy, even homes where they can be together. It is not one vast, monotonous assembly, but an infinitely varied world like this,—a variety of homes, each drawing to itself those who belong to it, a place for every one and every one in his place.

Shall we know each other in the other world? Yes, far better than we know each other here. The progress of man implies a more intimate knowledge of his fellow-man. Animals seem to know each other chiefly in their external relations. Man, in his lower state, does not enter very deeply into the souls of those nearest to him. As he ascends, he knows them better. He understands more of their character, hopes, purposes, needs, qualities, defects, and so is able to help them much more effectually. But, still, how little we know of each other, how difficult is communication, how hard to tell what is within us! How we misunderstand each other! How we misinterpret each other's motives! How seldom comes an hour of real intercourse, when soul speaks to soul! But, in the higher world, I believe we shall enter easily and naturally into the most intimate communion, shall know as we are known. There all disguises and concealments, all diffidence and distrust, shall fall away from the soul; and we shall have the joy, perhaps the highest joy we have known on earth,

of coming into intimate union with those we love. The heart-rending misunderstandings of this life will cease. The cruelties born of ignorance will be no more. The harsh, cold, bitter judgments we pass on each other will be left behind.

If, in a long life here, I have gained anything which is worth keeping, it is the knowledge and friendship and love of pure, generous, noble souls. Am I to lose that great inheritance? Am I to go into the other world poor, lonely, homesick, alone? Am I to console myself by being an unembodied spirit, wandering solitary among the stars or filling space with no home, no society, no brotherhood? I do not so understand the lessons of experience or the facts of observation. When all other memory fades from the mind of the dying, when his other thoughts are bewildered, the other impressions of time effaced, he still shows by a faint pressure of the hand, by a feeble sign of his head, that his love remains. The last look of the dim eye seeks the faces of those he loves. The last faint whisper of the failing voice is a murmur of blessing on those dear ones. Love is stronger than death: will it not survive the grave?

Yes: when I open my eyes on a new world, I expect to come once more into the company of those who have been my inspiration, my comfort, my joy in this life. I shall learn what these years have been teaching them, and they shall

be again my friendly companions and helpers. I shall see again the parents and the dear children whose love has sweetened my life. I shall be a little child once more myself. Yes; and I hope to come very near to my master, Jesus, and to have my errors corrected, and be taught the alphabet of a higher language of truth. Not all at once, perhaps; for the laws of gradation and limitation will apply there as here. But, if faith and hope and love abide, then there will be always more of knowledge, more of work, and more of love in that divine beyond. With such views as these, we can be better consoled for the loss of those who leave our sides. We can be more ready to go ourselves when the time comes.

IX

"SOULS ALREADY RISEN WITH CHRIST"

"If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."— Col. iii. 1.

The festival of Easter is the oldest of the festivals of the Church, and also the chief festival. Long before any one thought of keeping Christmas, Christians kept with joy the festival of the resurrection. A famous Christian historian in the fourth century, Eusebius, tells us that in the year 159, Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John, went to Rome to induce the Bishop of Rome to have the same day for Easter as that of the Eastern Church. This shows that not much more than a hundred years after the death of Jesus his resurrection was celebrated in the Eastern and Western Churches, one keeping it on the day of the month when it occurred, the other on the day of the week. It was an unimportant but a fortunate dispute, for it enables us to know that Easter was already widely kept as a feast of the resurrection in the middle of the second century.

There is no doubt that to the early Christians the resurrection of Jesus was the great historical fact of Christianity. Paul himself, who gives

us an ideal and spiritual Christ, surprises us by saying that, unless Christ is risen, all Christian preaching and belief are vain; for all rest on that fact, all revolve around it. The celebration of Easter Sunday has been during nearly eighteen centuries a perpetual declaration by the whole Church, of faith in the resurrection of Jesus. It has been a day of joy, of triumph, of hope; it has given mankind confidence in a future life; it has swallowed up the horror of the crucifixion, and surrounded the cross with a halo of glory. It has abolished death, fulfilling the prediction of Jesus, "If a man keep my sayings, *he shall not see death.*" Christians have often ceased to notice that there is such a thing as death. But more than this, it has given the world confidence in the power of Jesus to save the soul, to forgive sin, to purify from all unrighteousness. It has given us faith in a spiritual life which shall never know spiritual death, in the certain moral triumph of good over evil. This is the one point where the soul and body of the Christian religion are bound together in a union which cannot be dissolved. Here a physical fact and an ideal truth meet together: here spiritual religion and historic experience kiss each other. An event which happened outwardly on this earth about eighteen hundred and fifty years ago is indissolubly connected with the moral and religious life of the world.

This contradicts, as we know, many prevail-

ing opinions. It is thought by many that there can be no essential connection between outward history and inward truth. "We believe truth because it is true," say many, "not because it is taught by one person or another. Truth is no more true because Jesus taught it than because Confucius taught it. Suppose it had been Judas Iscariot, and not Jesus, who had said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' would it have been any less true than it is now?"

Now, we must certainly admit all this. A truth is not less true because a bad man says it, nor more true because a good man declares it. It is not more true, but it may be a great deal more effective. If we were pure intellect, it might make no difference. When it is a purely intellectual question, it now makes no difference. We accept or reject a statement in mathematics without regard to the character of the man who proposes it. We look only at the calculation itself. But it is different with moral questions, —with questions of religion, freedom, honor, justice, love. When Whitefield preached in this country, twenty thousand persons once listened to him on Boston Common. In England he preached once to sixty thousand persons, and great results followed. Multitudes were converted to faith in God, and to the purpose of leading a good life, by his sermons. These sermons were printed and they were as commonplace as possible. Reading them would hardly ever

convert a single soul. What he said, however, was just as true in the book as it was in the sermon; but it did not *seem* as true. The reason is that no man *is* a pure intellect; but in every man intellect is intimately joined with heart, imagination, sympathy. Dr. Franklin came very near being pure intellect; but, when he heard Whitefield preach, he was moved to do what he had deliberately determined, for good reasons, not to do. He was lifted by the contagion of the preacher into a higher region, where he saw the importance of what his cool intellect never had been able to see. Man does not live by bread only, nor does he believe by reason only, nor perceive only by his senses. He lives by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God,—by reason and sympathy, intellect and love, by intuition, sentiment, aspiration, faith. Now, the man who is himself filled with these qualities in a high degree has power to rouse them in others. The truly eloquent man is one who speaks out of a full heart and soul. He whose soul is most alive can move others the most. He moves them, not by his words only, but by his whole character and being. A great soul, embodied not in words, but in a great life, in noble actions, in truths borne witness to by suffering deeds,—he stamps truth on the souls of mankind with an indelible impression. Words are cheap: it is not difficult to say fine things. But, when great thoughts come from a living soul,

equally great, all men feel their power. Thus it is the life of Jesus and the grandeur of his soul which can alone explain the immense impression which his teaching has made on the world.

Now, we find that the resurrection of Jesus was the fact that seemed to the disciples of Jesus of supreme value, as the highest manifestation of his divine life. Paul, who mentions no other miracle of Jesus, dwells on this as of essential importance. He says that Christ was "declared to be the son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead." He constantly speaks of the "power of his resurrection." "If Christ be not risen," he says, "your faith is vain: you are yet in your sins."

Why is such great importance ascribed to this one event? Why were the apostles chosen, not so much to be witnesses to the other events in the life of Christ as to be the witnesses of his resurrection?

The answer is that this great fact gave the disciples of Jesus the faith, courage, power, joy, which they could obtain from nothing else. They had seen their master die in cruel tortures on the cross, conquered by the hatred of his foes. Malice had done its worst. All hope was at an end. At once they found him at their side again, alive. He had not gone down into some dark Hades: he had gone up to be with God, his Father and their Father. He had

gone up, but had not gone away. He would be with them always, even to the end of the age. All power was given to him in heaven and earth. They were to go and teach all nations his truth, and his power would go with them. They felt him nearer to them than ever before. They speak of sitting with him in heavenly places while still in this world. They had already risen with him, for this sublime faith in his presence and power lifted them into a different atmosphere of faith and love. Therefore, Paul says to them in one text, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above." As Jesus was living above in heaven with God, and yet was with them in all their work here, so they were also living in heaven with him while doing that work below. Thus the resurrection was not a past event, not a single miracle, like the raising of Lazarus, but a continued miracle, a constant supernatural presence going with them everywhere. It was a life of faith and love, forever flowing from the heavenly world into their hearts and lives. It was not a break in the order of things, again to be repaired, but an opening out of the higher world, through which a steady influx of spiritual life came down to the hearts of all believers, abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light.

So, when the apostles speak of the resurrection of Christ, they are not speaking of a miracle

which happened long ago, but of what was happening then; not a past portent, but the presence of heavenly power and love going with them always. That Christ rose from the dead was not a miracle in the sense of a violation of the laws of nature. On the contrary, it was the revelation of a hitherto undiscovered natural and universal law. As Jesus rose, so should all rise. It was a revealed law that as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Adam represents the earthly part, which alone dies; Christ the spiritual part, which lives on, untouched by death. The resurrection of Christ was therefore no mere wonder, but a revelation that death is nothing to the soul,—only a step in its upward progress.

The only exceptional fact in the resurrection of Jesus was that he was able to appear to his disciples, and thus to show them the truth of his immortality and theirs. But why should it be thought impossible or incredible that God, in the order of his providence, which causes all the dead to rise, should allow it to be sometimes seen and known that they rise. If this were ever to be permitted, it would be in the case of Jesus. One so full of divine life, having this great work to do of saving all mankind from woe and sin, and of lifting all into communion with God, might well have the power to break through the thin partition which divides the world of spirit from the world of sense, and to make himself

visible to those he loved, to give them strength for their work. It is evident that he felt in himself this power, even before he died; he spoke of rising on the third day; he said he had power to lay down his life and take it again, that he was himself the resurrection and the life. He was so filled with divine inspiration that he saw beforehand that he should rise up when he seemed to go down, and that death could have no dominion over him.

We to-day, dear friends, enter into this region of faith. We also are risen with Christ. We sit in heavenly places with him. For heaven is not a place far off, above the skies, somewhere outside of the orbit of Saturn and Neptune; but it is a world of spiritual life all around us. Christ has abolished death to all who believe in him. Those who believe in him do not die: they go on, they go in, they go up.

While the disciples at Emmaus were talking with their Master, their eyes were opened and they knew him. While we talk with Jesus on this Easter Sunday, our eyes are opened and we know him. He is our friend,—the friend of every soul that needs him. He is the friend of every poor, sinful, broken heart that thinks it has no friend on earth. He is the friend of all who wish to have his help. The true Christ is not in the past, he is here. He is not dead and gone. Behold! he is alive forevermore. He has not come merely to give us a right to be with him

in some future heaven. He has brought heaven down to us here. He is with us always, even to the end of the world.

The power of the resurrection is in this, that it abolishes death. It teaches us that death is really nothing. What we call death is a step on and up. It is a step upward to all, even to the worst man, to the most impenitent sinner. Resurrection strictly means ascent. Translated rightly, it is *surrection*, or going up. They who have done good go up to the resurrection of life; they who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. The good go up to receive more life: the bad go up to see themselves as they are, to be freed from self-deception, to know their folly and sin, to learn that evil is always misery, and good always content. There is keen suffering, no doubt, when the bad man, who has deceived himself in this world, sees himself as he is. But that suffering is good for him; he has gone up to receive it; he is higher than he was before. God's hell as well as God's heaven is above us, not below us. We go up to it, not down.

Since God gives death to all his creatures to whom he gives life, death must be as necessary a good as life. Death is a universal gift of God. Every creature that lives must die. Therefore, death is no punishment, no evil, but a part of the universal plan and law of progress.

Last week I went to the funeral of one of this church who has belonged to it since she was

a child. When I first knew her, she was working to support an aged mother, and full of a sweet and humble loyalty to truth and good which never forsook her. Afterward she was in the Temporary Home for Children, teaching and taking care of these little ones, and full of tender love for their needs and for them. Her simple piety, her unaffected goodness, drew all hearts to her. She was the friend of the friendless, of the poor, of the forlorn, of the sinful. When she knew she was to die, she spoke such tender and hopeful words to all around her that, though most of them were of a different church and creed, they all felt the presence of one to whom Jesus had said, "There is no real death to the soul." A great grief came over the whole community when she went away; and they said to me,—as people so often say,—"Why was such a useful person taken, one we needed so much, when so many useless ones are left?" And all I could answer was that those whom we need most here are, perhaps, those who are needed most there. Why should one who is thoroughly fitted for a higher state and higher duties remain to do lower ones in this world?

And I attended another funeral this week; of a poor sufferer who had borne sickness and infirmity during long years so patiently that disease was conquered and pain ceased to be an evil, and suffering was put under her feet. Love took the sting out of sorrow, and therefore out of death.

Such as these do not die: they go forward and upward. Nor do they go away: they remain to help us and cheer us here below.

Let us realize our immortality this Easter morning. Let us know that there stretches before us an endless life,—not a few years only in which to think out the truth, and work for the good, and then all over, but time enough for all thought, all work, all hope, all love. How narrow and puny is the life of him who does not believe in a hereafter! How little he ventures to undertake; how worthless seems all he can do, if it is to end to-morrow, and no more! But to us, believing in an endless, upward tendency of life, in a ceaseless advance toward the infinite truth and love, there is perpetual incentive to progress.

Resurrection is going up, not down, at death. We go up according to the amount of life in us. Jesus is the resurrection and the life, because, being so full of life himself, he opens our souls to receive life and love from God. He vitalizes us, and so lifts us up. Immortality is a thing of degrees. It is the conscious existence and progress of the will devoted to what is right and good. Still more full of immortality is the soul which trusts in the infinite care of God, trusts in him as a Father, commits itself to him as a faithful Creator, and reposes in his perfect love. In such a soul there is a fulness of life which is itself immortality.

Immortality is the sense of life, the sense of a

full existence, coming always from God. Conscious that God lives in it, and that it lives and moves and has its being in him, it has no dread of death. Death has no dominion over it. The only death is the fear of death,—the want of faith in things unseen, the low desire which clings only to what perishes.

The Latin nations call this day by a name derived from the Passover. It looks to our deliverance from death and the rescue from the grave. But the Teutonic nations give it a name derived from the other view,—of the coming of a new life. It is Easter, or rising up: it means the spring, when all nature arises, renewed by a perpetual miracle. The coming of new life every spring seems always a miracle, but it is only the operation of a continued law. So our rising out of death seems a miracle, but it also comes by a divine law. When the little buds, carefully packed up in numerous envelopes, defying frost, begin to swell, and to shake out their tiny leaves into the soft air, it seems like a miracle; but it is a law. When the dry seeds in the ground thrust down their tender rootlets and push up their soft stalks, and presently change the brown earth to gentle green, it also seems a miracle; but it is the divine life working by a divine law in nature. When you or I seem to go down into death, but really pass up into fuller life, that also will seem a miracle; but it will be the power of God work-

ing according to universal order to fill us with himself.

Therefore, on this Easter Sunday morning, while its sun shines so brightly around us, let us all thank God and take courage. Let us not look backward, but forward; not downward, but upward; not be desponding, but hopeful. Are there any of us here who feel lonely, bereaved, desolate? Behold! the heavens are opened and an innumerable company of friends are waiting for you to welcome you when you go up, and lead you to him who liveth and was dead, and is alive forevermore. Are there any of us who are hesitating to do what we know to be right, not ready yet to do our duty, still postponing till to-morrow what we ought to do to-day? Let us on this bright Easter morning begin to do our work in full faith that God will enable us to accomplish it in this or in some other world. O weary heart, arise, and be strong! Sad soul, be glad to-day; for Christ has arisen! Sinful soul, turn to God and forsake your sins, and be made alive! Take part in the better resurrection, which lifts out of evil into good. Make this day the beginning of a new life, which shall never know any end, but shine brighter to the perfect day.

If we, then, be risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above. Our sense of immortal life will deepen as we devote ourselves to all things generous, humane, true, and good.

This is the true way to keep Easter,—to rise out of all that is poor, mean, cowardly, into courage and faith. Let us give ourselves, souls and bodies, to God, and be sure that all things will work for good to those who love him.

X

WHAT GOD GIVES HE GIVES FOREVER

"I know that what God gives he gives forever."—Eccl. iii. 14.

The life of man is so full of change and loss, everything that we love and prize is so transient, man himself is so fragile, his possessions so uncertain, nature around him so liable to decay, that a large part of literature seems to resolve itself into one strain of unintermitting elegy. Everything is passing away,—youth, manhood, and age; days, months and years; powers of mind, powers of body, powers of heart. We stand amid the ruins of the past,—ruins of former races, of past civilizations. Nothing comes so home to the heart as the pathos which commemorates, in song, story, oration, the buried but unforgotten past,—past youth, past love, past joy,—

> "The smiles, the tears
> Of childhood's years,
> The words of love then spoken;
> The eyes that shone now dimm'd and gone,
> The cheerful hearts now broken."

And, what is surprising, it is not age or decay which affects this strain of sentiment, and most

enjoys the sad sweetness of recollection; but youth sings these pleasures of memory in preference to those of hope. Every young poet is pretty sure to begin his career with a musical melancholy, mourning over his disappointed hopes, his buried loves and cruelly maltreated expectations, and declaring himself at the age of eighteen to have exhausted life, and to live henceforth only in the past. We all love to moralize by the side of the brawling brook, and compare it with the flight of time. The night before the attack on Quebec, General Wolfe, as he was rowed in a boat on the St. Lawrence to reconnoitre the enemy, repeated Gray's "Elegy in a Churchyard," then just published, and declared he would rather be the author of that poem than victor in the approaching conflict. So congenial to the human heart is the elegiac sentiment which dwells mournfully on the past and on what it has taken away. But I think, if we examine this feeling, we shall find the pleasure to depend on our perception of the fact that what we prized has not been wholly taken from us; that we retain it by the power of memory, and can commune with it still in recollection. And this I will endeavor to show: that what God has given us nothing ever takes from us.

The beauties of nature which God gives are a permanent possession. Every time we have seen a sunrise or sunset, a magnificent heaped-up mass of clouds, the grand battery from which the red

lightning will presently flash and the heavy artillery of heaven will roar; or the ocean rolling on the beach; or the yellow moonlight sparkling on the lake, the immeasurable smile of the sea; the awful dome of night, with its unchanging groups of stars; a little brook rippling over stones; a great mountain carrying on its shoulders pastures, forests, glaciers, fields of snow, into the clouds; every time we have seen through the quivering leaves the deep blue sky over our head, with a little white cloud slowly sailing through circumambient air, or have gathered a single flower, or watched the changing foliage of autumn, or the air filled with drifting snow-flakes,—every time we have seen any of these phenomena, we have been fed with food in our souls. There it is, within the depths of our hearts,—a picture such as no mortal painter ever executed. Prince Doria and Prince Borghese have their picture galleries filled with masterpieces of incalculable value; but has not each one of us in his memory a better picture gallery than theirs? They must leave theirs behind them when they go, but we take ours everywhere with us. Did Raphael ever paint the evanescent smile we have all seen wandering over an infant's lips, or the dreamy gaze of its eyes? Who could ever catch the divine light of thought, of devotion, of affection, which makes the dullest features radiant with immortal glory? Day by day God pours these treasures into our souls. A chief difference between the

joy we take in nature and in other pleasures is that the former lasts, that we do not tire of nature. We enjoy a new house, but tire of it. We have pleasure in a new horse, a new book, a journey to Europe: these things at last all tire. But Nature never betrays the heart that loves her. As age advances, she grows more dear and tender to the soul.

Still more is this the case with beauty of character, the beauty of generous hearts and noble lives, the beauty of divine self-sacrifice, or what the Scripture calls the beauty of holiness. We look back and remember the saints, the generous souls we have known; and their beauty makes the best part of our life. Whatever we have of faith and courage comes largely from them. If we have anything of generosity, it is inspired, or at least fed, by their lives; and they mediate to us God's effulgent goodness.

Thus, too, when God gives Truth, he gives it forever.

Paul says, "If there be knowledge, it shall pass away." Knowledge, in its outward form, passes away; but truth remains. The outward fact is forgotten, but the soul within the fact lasts. Beliefs change, truth remains. I find that I often forget faces and names; but if, twenty years ago, I had an hour's talk with some one, so that I came to form a notion of his character, I remember that forever.

In the history of opinion, we find everything

changing. All is flux. The doctrines orthodox to-day were wholly unknown to the early centuries. Perhaps, among all the doctrines of Orthodoxy, none is held more essential than the Atonement. But during the first thousand years of Christianity the universal doctrine of the Church was that Christ died, not to make atonement to God, but to buy souls out of the hands of the devil. Yet below all this changing tide of opinion there remains something permanent. In this particular doctrine, for example, which now seems so strange, this much at least is true: that the death of the good somehow lifts us out of the power of evil, somehow purifies our mind and heart. The theory goes: the fact remains. Human creeds and doctrines pass away: the deep human experience of the mind brought face to face with truth remains. Beliefs pass: truth remains. We forget the things behind: we press on to those before. But the things behind, so far as they are realities, go with us always.

Jesus was the greatest and boldest reformer who ever lived. To him the Jewish Temple was nothing, the Jewish Sabbath was nothing: man was the true temple, human good was the only sanction of the Sabbath; every good man belonged to his church; the pure in heart saw God, even though they were heathen or infidel. And yet Jesus, so much of a reformer, so radical in all things, said he came not to destroy, and that no jot or tittle would pass from the law till all

was fulfilled. He took up all the truth of the past into the present, and carried it on into the future.

All truth is permanent: it can never pass away. The heart and mind of man are so made that they cling with passionate love to all realized truth, and will hold it, though mixed with ever so much error. So the California miner who has found a nugget of gold holds it firmly, though mixed with earth and dross. He will not let it go till you can separate the earth and alloy, and leave the gold pure. So religious people cling to doctrines a thousand times over proved to be false and absurd, not because they love falsehood, but because they love the truth with which that error is mixed. No mere logician can make them let go of the doctrine by any argument or ridicule. They will not relinquish it till one comes who can see the truth in the error, and give them that truth in a purer form. Then they let the error go. This was what Christ did. He took up into the gospel all that was true in Heathenism and Judaism; and so Paganism fell, and the Jewish Church became the soil of Christianity.

In every real experience, in every real insight, there is something permanent. As we grow older, we grow wiser. Life teaches us all more than study teaches. We forget our opinions; but the faith and hope and love which have grown up in us by all the lessons of Providence, the sight of spiritual truths, the knowledge of Christ and of

God and eternal things which we have gained,—these do not pass away.

When God gives us love, he gives it forever. Superficial sympathies, based on accident, on proximity, or common interests of the hour, are very fugitive; but the love which sees what is best in us, and cares for that, is something which cannot pass away. For this is like God's love. He is the God of the living, and loves the living part, the immortal part, of our nature. And so this human love attaches itself to the deepest, noblest, and best thing in us, and often discovers better things in us than we know ourselves, and so helps us most of all.

If we love that which is best in each other, not the fugitive though seducing charm, but the truth and sincerity and earnest feeling in each other's souls, our love to each other helps, and does not hinder; if we vitalize and encourage it by conscience and faith, if we help each other by it nearer to truth, duty, and God, then our love for each other becomes immortal. This love defies accident, absence, change.

Our friend may be much better than we, but that does not separate him from us in any world. Christ was much better than his disciples; but, as long as they loved him and followed him, he loved them. "Whosoever will do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother," said he. Not only he who does it, but who wills to do it, who hungers for it!

If I have ever truly loved any one, that love remains. If he has ever truly loved me, he loves me forever. But by true love I mean love of what is true,—not love of the surface, but of the centre. The heart, wiser than the head, often sees through the surface to the central life, divines what is there, is a prophet telling what is to come. I see in my friend not his outward, external, superficial habit of thought and action; but I see the better nature below, repressed for a time, striving upward. This alone is true friendship: to see what is good deep down in another's soul, and to help that upward into life, and to enable it to conquer the outward frivolity and evil. Such friendship as this cannot die. He who has once known me so knows me always. Accident may separate, circumstances may divide; but we belong to each other evermore.

When God gives us this best of friendship, he gives it forever. People sometimes ask uneasily whether they shall know their friends again after death, and love them again in another life. But what is immortality, if love is not immortal? When Christ was about to go, he comforted his disciples by telling them that he would prepare a place in the higher world, where they would be with him forever,—"that where I am, there ye may be also." If those poor disciples, so ignorant, so weak, those who would all presently forsake him, were still to be with him, we need not

fear that our friends will be so far above us that we shall not be able to find them.

Going up to God does not mean going away from those below. Christ's going up was by going down to help the humblest. The best and noblest in this world are those who care the most for those below them. So it will be in the other world, if God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He and all who belong to him can never lose their love for those who are lowest down and furthest away.

Whoever has helped us to truth, to goodness, to better purposes and better faith, is ours, and will belong to us always. All the great divine souls of history are ours, our friends and helpers forever. These are the gifts of God, which he will never take away from us.

When a good man goes,—some man who seems necessary and needed by all persons and for all things; some man whose very presence near us gives us confidence, in whose existence in our city we have a guarantee of safety, a man tried in every way, and not found wanting,—we seem to lose more than in any other way. The sense of loss in the community is then very great. When, for example, John Andrew died, one of our city journals said that Massachusetts owed to him that she was able to duplicate her Revolutionary record, and for the second time to lead the nation in the war for freedom. We saw then how much

one man could do. With most other men in the chair of State, we should have waited, as the other States waited, not being quite ready; and the great opportunity would have gone by. But here was a man who possessed those rare and seldom united faculties; of the mind able to see what was coming, the heart which could realize the immense importance of the right step, and the courage to take all the responsibility of doing what was needed. When you have those three qualities combined,—intellectual sagacity, moral sense, and determined will,—you have the man who can turn defeat into victory, and seize and hold the fleeting opportunity. And, when God gives such a man, he gives him forever.

Once, when Fred Douglas was setting forth the evils and sins of the land, and showing how hopeless its condition was, Sojourner Truth cried out from the audience, "Frederic, is God dead?" and oratory stood rebuked by faith.

When the young go, those in the midst of a happy life, it seems inexpressibly sad. They have all of life before them, long, happy years opening to them, friendship, homes, everything to love and enjoy. We say, Why are they taken and we left; we who have had our day, who have seen all, who have done our work? And yet there is another view. How happy are those who have grown up innocently, been surrounded by the sweetest affections, have enjoyed the purest

experience, and have gone before a single cloud darkened their horizon!

"His life was bright,— bright without spot it was,
And cannot cease to be. No ominous hour
Knocks at his door with tidings of mishap.
Far off is he, above desire or fear;
No more submitted to the change and chance
Of this uncertain planet."

Goodness, real goodness, is so much better than anything else that, if we ever had any of it, we cling to it always. A man who has ever done one generous act values that in his heart, in the midst of a sordid life, more than all its outward successes. A man who has ever really prayed a sincere prayer to God never forgets it. A man who has grown cold, hard, and selfish, looks back to his innocent childhood, remembers how he felt then, remembers his good, honest intentions then, and keeps that memory at the bottom of his heart. If you could take off, one by one, the outer layers and folds of worldly covering, hard selfishness, cold, merciless will, and come to that which is inmost, you would find in the centre of his heart that childish simplicity locked in, covered up, but kept, not thrown away. So in Warwick Castle, by the side of the face of Henry VIII, the bloated, self-indulgent tyrant, hangs a little picture of Henry VIII, an innocent child.

We are never nearer heaven than when stand-

ing by the lifeless form of some great and good man or woman. Such souls never die: they only go out of sight. "Dying, behold, they live!" Their souls have passed into the heart of the nation. Death, by some unexplained mystery, transforms them from an individual power among us into a universal presence within us. So Washington has gone into the nation's life, and we all seem to possess something of Washington. All America was Washingtonized by his life and death.

Once, after long centuries of evil and ignorance, God sent into the world a man who seemed to have escaped all taint of sin, and to have a power which took hold of men's souls with a strange authority. In him were joined light and love, so that he, by this union, inspired life. Dead souls came to life at his word, dead hearts began once more to beat, dead hands to do good work. Those who were in their graves, and contented to be in their graves, heard his voice and came forth. He called himself Son of Man; that is, simply, the Man. The world for the first time had a man in it,—full-grown, full-balanced in head and heart. Sometimes, also, he called himself Son of God; for to him God was not a judge or a king, but a father. What happened? Providence allowed this wonderful soul, this treasure of mankind, to be taken in a year or two, and crucified. Narrow-minded bigots thought him in their way, and God allowed them to kill

him. What then? Then it was shown how goodness is immortal and cannot be killed, how death turns into life. What he foresaw and foretold came to pass: "I go away, and come to you." When he went, he came. "He who was with you shall be in you," he said. And so it was. He whom they had before outwardly attended, now became their inward inspiration, their holy spirit. His death became the redemption of the world. His soul passed into the life of his disciples, and through them into the life of the age. It leavened the whole lump of human nature. In a few centuries, the grand Roman Empire laid aside its own ancient religion, deposed its pontiffs, abolished its flamens, silenced its augurs, and received this crucified Jew as its master. This man had left nothing in writing, but his fugitive sayings became the oracles of mankind. He had formed no system of belief, but all the venerable philosophies became the servants in his school. He came from the obscurest corner of an obscure state, to be the light of the world. He taught a year, and died, and is the life of mankind. So it was seen that, when God gave Jesus to the race, he gave him forever.

It is now more than twenty-five years since the purest, noblest, truest, bravest of the then rising generation of this land went to the war. How many were swept away! How much of the best mind, heart, soul of the North seemed to perish, and perish forever, in that cruel struggle! Yet

I doubt if any living men exercise such power today in the land as those whom we call dead. Each of these noble ones is acting on a circle of men and women whom he has purified, strengthened, elevated to a higher plane of thought and work. Through their minds and hearts, these lost ones are present, active as ever.

When God has once given us to know himself, this greatest of all gifts he gives forever. After years of trivial, outward life,—life empty of any solid satisfaction,—there comes some day of trial, of sorrow, of great and bitter disappointment, some day in which remorse seizes us for our wasted years, or our hardness and indifference toward our friends, or our life empty of any great purpose. Then, perhaps, in the midst of our sense of utter helplessness, we are led to see that God loves us still, that his arms are around us, that he can forgive to the uttermost all our folly; and in that sight we begin a new life. After this, no matter what comes, we have something we can never lose again,—a faith in God's love which nothing can quench, one anchor which holds fast in every storm. "Now abides faith," says Paul, telling how belief changes and opinions pass away. If we have ever once really trusted the Supreme Goodness, that trust will always remain in the depths of the soul,—a seed of hope and love. When God gave that, he gave it forever. I suppose this is what is really meant by the Calvinistic doctrine of "the perseverance

of the saints." Not that the saints may not do wrong and go wrong, may not forget their best purpose sometimes, forget God's love sometimes; but there remains that experience in their hearts always, ready to bring them once again to their Father.

That which brought the prodigal son back to his father was the remembrance of his father's liberality: "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare!"

It is an infinite blessing when little children grow up in a church which teaches them that God is, in his essence, not wrath, but love. Then they are saved from the untold misery which those suffer who are taught to believe in God as a stern judge. No matter what comes to them, they have always this faith in a Providence which watches, leads, and cares for them. They have one blessing which they can never lose, which will comfort them in their sorrow, and make death easy. This gift, also, God gives forever.

It is a great thing to have had a happy youth, and God gives to most young people such a fountain of joy within, that youth is almost always happy. It may be in the midst of poverty and hardship, but still it is happy. Its inward light is thrown on all things around. And, in after years of bloom and loneliness and sorrow, this vision of the happy youth, this glory of childhood, inspires hope of a future joy to be. This is the idea of Wordsworth's wonderful ode on

"Intimations of Immortality," from recollections of the light and beauty which surrounds childhood. When God has given that, he says, he gives it forever.

"O joy that in our embers
Is something that doth live;
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!"

The poets have seen this great truth of the permanence of all the best things, of all gifts truly divine. Shelley says that

"The one remains: the many change and pass.
Heaven's light above us shines: earth's shadows fly."

And, of his friend just gone, this poet, who thought himself an atheist, speaks with the hope of a Christian believer:

"He hath outsoared the shadow of our night,
Envy and calumny and rage and pain;
And that unrest which men miscall delight
Shall touch him not, nor torture him again.
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown old, a head grown gray in vain."

And Wordsworth, in the ode I have before quoted, goes on to speak of

"Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,

Are yet the master light of all our seeing,
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence,— truths that wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man, nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy
Can utterly abolish or destroy."

And Tennyson, too, mourning his lost friend, shows us in all his tender strains of lamentation that he has him still, because he loves him so truly and so entirely:

"Oh, loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

"Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that *canst not* die,
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine."

XI

"FROM FAITH TO FAITH"

" From faith to faith."— Rom. i. 17.

We live between two worlds,—the world of things seen and temporal and the world of things unseen and eternal; the world of which we take hold through the senses and that which we apprehend by faith. We walk by sight, and we walk by faith. Every one, every day, lives by both these faculties.

Faith is a deep fountain in the soul, below reason, below knowledge, far below sensible experience; and without the exercise of faith we could not live. We believe in the reality of an outward world. We believe the sun, moon, and stars are not appearances, but realities; that trees and flowers, rocks and earth, men and women, are actual existences. And yet, after all, these are only pictures on the retina of the eye. Do you think you see your friend when you look at him? Not at all. All that the bodily sense perceives, and carries by a nerve to the brain, is a picture in the camera obscura at the back of the eye. And yet, when I say this, it does not make you doubt for a moment that you really are looking at an actual person outside of yourself. Why? Because you are made to have faith in substance

below all phenomena. This faith is universal and necessary. We could not act without it. It is an instinctive, universal, and necessary faith which is given to every human being.

From faith to faith! From this faith in the reality of an outward world, we grow up into other forms of faith, deeper, larger, more intense. How large a part of our life comes from within, not from without!

The next step which we take by faith is our confidence that these realities about us are upheld by unchanging law. We believe that the laws of nature are permanent. What reason have we for thinking that, when we wake in the morning, we shall find things around us as we left them the night before; that we shall meet our family as usual around the breakfast table; our place of business where it was; the work of life going on just as it did yesterday; human nature always the same? What reason have we for trusting that our food will nourish, and not poison us; that our clothing will keep us warm? "Because it always has been so," you say. Yes; that is one reason. Experience turns faith into knowledge. But how small is our experience! How little that "always" is, compared with the immensities of duration! Behind and below this short experience of the stability of things lies an instinctive faith that God is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever; that his laws work steadily and surely, without haste or rest; that there is no

caprice, no accident, no irregularity in the universe. This second step of faith is the foundation on which all science rests, that all forces are governed by unchanging and eternal law; that there cannot be any violation of natural law. Even the miracles of Jesus need not be regarded as violations of law, but rather as manifestations of other laws deeper and higher than those with which we are now familiar. All progress in science and the arts consists in new revelations or applications of law. There was nothing preternatural or unnatural in the wonderful works of Jesus. They were done by the supreme force of soul. One day, perhaps, when the race has advanced far enough, and we have "perfect men in Christ Jesus," his prediction may be fulfilled,—"Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father."

I do not think we notice how large a part of our life comes from this mysterious region of things unseen. Take some familiar illustrations.

A short time since there was an exhibition of old pictures of the Washington family. George Washington himself was there, looking somewhat different from his usual portraits. Martha Washington was there, and members of the Custis family and Lee family. Whence came the interest which brought crowds to look at the paintings? Nothing in the pictures themselves. If they had had no names attached to them, few persons would have gone to see them. But they

roused great memories, they brought up the latent poetry of the soul. We were carried back to the old heroic age of our fathers. We walked by faith amid invisible and shadowy recollections. These pictures stimulated the imagination to represent once more the undying past.

You leave the home of your boyhood, the country farm among the hills. You go out West or come to Boston. You engage in business struggles. You are a soldier on the battlefield of life. One day, you say, "I will go and look at the old place." So you return to the mountain home of childhood. You go through the rooms, which seemed so large once and look so small now. Here you played by your mother's side, on the sunny floor. In that field you took your first ride on horseback. Here is the garden where you gathered raspberries and strawberries for breakfast, amid the early dew. How small a part of what you feel resides in the outward objects! To a stranger they are insignificant. It is the world within which they awaken that gives all the charm to the scene, the world of faith, of imagination, of loving memory.

Thus we walk by faith in our affections. We have confidence in father and mother, brothers and sisters and friends. We are rooted in this surrounding life. It is the home of the heart. What a blessing that children grow up in this atmosphere of belief, that they take for granted that their parents and friends are wise and good;

lean on these affections, and are safe; look back to them in after life, and have their souls still fed out of the sacred soil of such memories!

From faith to faith! Next comes our faith in human nature. There is an instinct of confidence of man in man, without which there could be no society, no union, no common work. Men are often deceived; but they must still take for granted that, in the main, men will do right, tell the truth, and stand by their engagements. The whole business world rests on this confidence. One of the worst evils of defalcations, embezzlements, false pretences, is that these all tend to weaken the great confidence of man in man. They give color to the base philosophy which assumes that men are all selfish, that every one has his price, that the world is given over to the Evil One. On the other hand, every act of self-sacrificing honesty, all loyalty to principle, each uncompromising adherence to justice and truth, strengthens man's confidence in man. And, unless we believe in goodness, unless we have confidence that men, though weak and liable to fall, do not love evil, how can any one try to make the world better? What a faith Jesus must have had in the moral capability of man when he said, "Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect!" What an ideal of goodness he and his apostles held up before the world, taking for granted that the world would follow!

and their faith in men worked on human minds and hearts to purify, uplift, and redeem.

If you wish to do good to your brother, you must have confidence in him. This is the first and most essential step toward helping him. Take for granted that men are mean and false, and you make them so. Take for granted that they wish to do right, and you lead them up the right way. They take courage from your confidence, and begin to believe in themselves.

From faith to faith! Confidence in man leads us to trust in God. He who has not faith in his brother whom he has seen, how can he have faith in God whom he has not seen? We say that God is good, and so we trust him. But what do we mean by goodness, except the goodness we have seen here? Infinite goodness is, to our conception, human justice, human generosity, human pity, human self-sacrifice, carried upward to their perfection. If we have no faith in man, how can we have faith in God? Every noble act of devotion to truth, every pure life unstained with evil, every word of pity, every instance of forgiving goodness, helps us to a better faith in that divine and eternal goodness which has no variableness or shadow of turning.

From faith to faith! From faith in man we rise to faith in God. This is trust, absolute trust, that the universe is based on goodness and love; that all things work together for good; that good

is stronger than evil, and must overcome it; that God loves all his children; and that sin and woe, the misery and wickedness of this world, are to end in peace and joy. This was the great faith of Jesus. It was a faith for all mankind on whom the sun shone and the rain fell. Before the mind of Jesus there stood no everlasting hell as a black contrast and counterpoise to an infinite heaven. He believed that he could draw all men unto him, and so to God. He would have the good news of a divine salvation preached to every creature. All who labored and were heavy laden could find rest in this great faith and hope. He has put the spirit into our hearts by which we say, Father; and, when we trust in God as a father, we have the germ of all religious faith.

Yet we are all inclined to say with the disciples, "Lord, I believe: help mine unbelief." We believe a little, but we need to believe more. How shall we increase our faith?

Every act of faith in God increases our faith in him. To him who hath shall be given. He who waits on the Lord will increase his strength. We do not increase our faith by argument, but by exercise. As life advances, our faith ought to deepen and strengthen.

Many persons find it hard to believe in any special providence. They say: "God governs the world by laws, and he never interferes with their workings. When we obey the natural laws, we are rewarded: when we disobey them, we are pun-

ished. How can I believe that God will alter the working of his laws to meet the needs, the dangers, the exigencies, of any individual?"

No, we need not believe this, and yet we may have faith in a Father who watches over his children. Often what seem to be the greatest of calamities turn out to be blessings. It seemed a dreadful thing for the Pilgrim Fathers to be driven by oppression from their pleasant homes in old England, to come to these wild shores, with a mysterious wilderness on one side, full of alarms, and a stormy sea on the other. But now we see the great opportunity which was given them to lay deep the foundations of a nation. Was it accident that brought them here? Was it blind law that put a people in New England who believed at once in order and liberty, in freedom and union, in religion and education? The roots of this mighty nation still draw nutriment from that sad and solemn beginning, foreordained before the foundation of the world.

The old man sits before his door beneath the great elm on a summer's afternoon, and recalls his past life. He sees how mercifully he has been led from the beginning; how his wild youth was restrained, his impetuous passions tempered, by events and circumstances in which he now sees everywhere a protecting hand. He looks back on trials and disasters which he found it hard to bear, to disappointments which at the time appeared to be intolerable. Now the setting sun of

his life parts the clouds through which it has traveled during the day, and throws a radiance of glory, beauty and blessing on the long succession of his years. Strength has come to him through this discipline. He has learned to be patient, to be generous, to be self-forgetting. He feels himself more and more in the presence of a heavenly Father, whose hand has led him through these varied scenes. What once looked like the work of an evil destiny he now finds to be the leading of a tender Providence.

And so he can say:

"That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good.

"That care and trial seem at last,
In memory's sunset air,
Like mountain ranges overpast
In purple distance fair.

"That all the jarring notes of life
Are blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm."

From faith to faith! In the same way, our faith in prayer grows till it becomes like that of Jesus, unwavering and sure. We often think, before experience has taught us better, that prayer is only contemplation, meditation; that

the only answer to prayer is the reaction of our own thoughts,—that it is not communion, but self-communion. We say that God will not change his laws in answer to prayer; and, having said that, we think the question settled. Yes, he does not change his laws. But may it not be one of his laws that those who ask him sincerely and earnestly for inward peace, light, strength, pardon, comfort, shall receive it? Far down in the mysterious depths of the soul, below any distinct consciousness, is the region where we are in communion with God. We hear no sound,—there is no tempest, no earthquake, no fire,—but a voice so low and sweet and still that we only know the peace that comes, the strength that is given, the comfort of the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts; and we say, "I *was* weak; I *am* strong."

The little child, in its childish grief, runs to its father and mother, that it may be folded in their arms. That is enough. We go to our heavenly Father, and that is enough. Is an earthly father nearer than he? Is any mortal tenderness so divinely tender as his? Shall we allow any little theories of law and causation to come between us and that great source of peace?

And so, too, of our faith in immortality. Men say, "We may see some reasons for believing in it, but we cannot know it." Suppose some one should say to your little boy: "Your father is very kind to you while you are with him, but he

does not care whether you live or die. If you should fall into the sea from a boat, he would not put out his hand to save your life." The boy would answer: "I know better. I know that he would." The child would know it: it would be no mere probability. And shall we say of God: Yes, he is our Father while we are here. He is an ever-present friend in whom we live and move and breathe. He has formed us with these wonderful powers by which we can know him and love him. He has educated us by the long experience of life, by the benignant glory of nature, by the far-reaching lessons of history, by the teaching of all the wise and good, by the love of all the dear and true; and then he will let us drop into nothing after these few years of earthly experience! He will let us fall back into the abyss of annihilation, while we are yet advancing in thought, aspiration, hope, our real life hardly begun, our reason but half developed, our best powers in their infantile stage of development! And will you tell me that I do not know the contrary, but only conjecture it? If I really know God as my Father, I know that he will not let me go: he will keep his child safe.

"I know not what the future hath
Of wonder or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

"And so, beside the silent sea,
I wait the muffled oar:
No harm from him can come to me
On ocean or on shore."

Thus faith grows just as knowledge grows. We climb from faith to faith by a manifold experience, and from the childish faith to that manly faith which is still childlike. We pass beyond the sandy deserts of doubt, the morass of scepticism: we rise to higher altitudes and to a broader expanse of vision. Below and behind are the difficult ravines, the tangled thickets, through which we passed with many a struggle. Now we see them resting in sunny peace and picturesque shadow below. We breathe the air of the upper skies. We are surrounded by a broad expanse of heaven. We are encircled and embraced by a divine love. Thus we go from faith to faith.

XII

MAN DOTH NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE

"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."—DEUT. viii. 3; MATT. iv. 4; LUKE iv. 4.

LIFE, in its fullest sense, is an activity proceeding from within, though fed from without. These two factors always go to the result. It is an inward force sustained by outward conditions.

As you go home to-day, some of you will pass the great elm on the Common. Its vast limbs and multitudes of branches are bare. It looks dead, but it is not dead. When spring comes, a million of buds will open into leaves; and their flickering shadows will fall during the long summer hours on the grass below. There is in that old tree some mysterious principle of inward life, ready to reappear when the outward conditions are presented to it.

Yet what that life is no physical analysis can discover. Open the trunk, dissect it to its core, examine it with the most powerful microscope, subject it to every test in the laboratory of the chemist, and it evades every research. It is an immaterial principle, since, though active in every part of the living plant, it is yet imperceptible to the sense or to any physical test.

This is just as true of the lowest forms of vegetable life as of the highest forms of spiritual life. The senses can no more perceive the life in protoplasm than the life in the soul of Dante. Life, wherever it exists, can neither be seen, felt, touched, nor tasted. It has neither dimensions nor weight; neither form, color, nor any other characteristic of matter. And since all we know of matter is *that it has these sensible qualities*, we are obliged to conclude that the principle of life, even in a fungus or a lichen, is an immaterial principle. So we say that life is an immaterial principle dependent on material conditions.

Animal life is higher than vegetable life. The life of the plant can do nothing but make it grow, and unfold into stalk, leaf, flower, and fruit. But the principle of life in an animal gives it more freedom and variety of activity. It can come and go. It has senses. It has intelligence. It has wonderful instincts. It is capable of affection and choice. But it is also dependent on material conditions, and more dependent than that of the plant. The plant needs only soil and sun and moisture. The animal needs variety of food, shelter, society, and various opportunities. The plant lives by sun and rain and earth *only*. The animal requires more than these.

The higher the life, the more of external help it needs for its development. Man, the highest of all, does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. In

order that a man shall really *live*,—live a really human life, and not a mere animal life,—he needs culture, knowledge, affection, work, nature and art, society and solitude; for man is not wholly alive when his body is alive, but when his soul also is alive. How much goes to the life of the soul! Thought, love, a strong purpose, a deep conviction, an interest in things and men, something to do, something to live for, a sense of progress, a sense of accomplishment,—these make us alive. A poet in a garret, cold and hungry, but with a soul full of images of divine beauty, and a great hope in his heart of creating a work which the world will not willingly let die, is more alive than he who, possessing every bodily comfort, has nothing in his empty mind and heart. The half-starved inventor, who is carrying in his mind the plan of the steam-engine or a steamboat which is to revolutionize society, of the daguerreotype which is to revolutionize art, is more alive than the woman who has her dresses and her amusements to think of, but nothing more. The greatest part of our life comes from the soul, not the situation. Only make the soul alive, and we are alive.

And the human soul requires for its food, to keep it in full life, a great variety of nutriment. It lives by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.

Nature is one of these words. The grandeur, tenderness, variety, harmony of nature, are divine

words, in which are life; and this life is the light of man. It is not necessary to visit Niagara or the Alps, the Cañons of Colorado or the Yosemite Valley, in order to be fed by this heavenly food. He who loves nature enjoys it and is refreshed by it in its every phase. To the most crowded streets of a city there comes the beauty of dawn and eve, sunrise and sunset. Into every garret which faces south the glorious sun pours a flood of radiance which fills it with rejoicing life. Over the head of the tired laborer, returning to his home at night, hang Orion and the Pleiades, Sirius and Arcturus. Little children in the courts and lanes see the wonder of falling and drifting snow and prismatic colors of the icicle. How these sights of nature feed the soul, and make a large part of its life! They become a portion of its fibre and texture; they constitute a reserved fund on which to draw in hours of gloom; they make life seem richer, larger, more hopeful; they bring us near to God in his creative energy, and so feed our life at its roots.

Human society and intercourse with man constitute another word of God by which we live. God has made men different, has divided them by language, race, class, creed, culture, that by this very variety they may feed each other's souls. It is a mistake to confine ourselves to one set or circle: we need to know all sorts of people in order to be fully alive ourselves. The man or woman grows narrow in mind and heart who sees

only the same people year by year. Travel does us good, and renews our life by bringing us in contact with those we do not see at other times. Any work which takes us out of our own limited sphere and puts us in natural relations of thought and action with new and different persons makes us more alive. A church which brings together all kinds of men and women on the common platform of humanity helps us in the same way. I think that the chief good of going to church is not to hear a sermon, but to meet with our fellow-men on the broad basis of universal needs, to unite with them in prayer and praise to a common Father. Spiritual life may come to us through the pulpit, but also from those who sit by our side, if there is in the congregation a spirit of reverence and brotherhood. No one lives to himself. We all depend on each other, and he who has the widest range of human sympathy receives back the largest measure of life. He gives, and it is given to him again.

We live also by *love*. He who loves no one and is loved by no one is only half alive. He has a name to live, and is dead. We need the daily bread of human affection. Little children are fed by the love of father and mother. Brothers and sisters who love each other communicate life to each other. "Better a dinner of herbs," says the prophet, "where love is, than the stalled ox and hatred therewith."

Here is a family living in luxury. They have

all that wealth can buy. The wife and daughters have fine dresses and jewels, equipages and rich furniture. The sons have their horses and dogs, their clubs and journeys to Paris. But, somehow, the atmosphere of the house is cold. There is no natural confidence, no dependence on each other, no little expressions of affection, no thoughtfulness for each other's needs. They do not know what is passing in each other's hearts: they have not taken pains to do so. The husband has given his wife everything except his love. This poor family is starving in the midst of seeming luxury,—starving for a little genuine affection,—their souls half dead for want of a little love.

I once found in a Western city by the river a sick girl who had been taken out of the street by a poor woman who kept a dining-room for sailors, with a kitchen behind it, and who made a little bed for the sick girl in the kitchen under a stairway. We thought the girl would be more comfortable in a hospital, and we took her there. She did have more comforts; but she missed the kind heart of the motherly old woman, and so went back to die in the kitchen, happier, amid all its discomforts, because she could see the motherly smile, and feel the kind, motherly hand of this poor woman, who never went to church and did not think herself a Christian, but who, I think, must have been surprised, when she reached the other world, to hear the Master say,

"Inasmuch as you did it to the poorest of these my sisters, you did it to me."

When I go into a hospital or an asylum or a poorhouse or a home for the insane or for the orphans, I always look to see if they have any of this sunshine of affection, this food of love, provided for them. You can tell in a moment whether it is there or not. Its presence shows itself in freedom, cheerfulness, an aspect of content and courage. Its absence is made known by chill manners and formal rules, by the depressed looks and hopeless aspect of the inmates. How can sick people get well unless they have love with their treatment? How can insanity be cured but by this balm of healing? This is better than all medicine for diseases, both of body and mind.

Every kind of truth, also, is a word which comes from God to make us more alive. We live by feeding on new truth. The mind needs to be nourished with new thoughts, and God sends them to us in various ways. Cowardice and habit dread these new words from God: they are afraid of new discoveries in science; they cling to the letter of the Bible; they fear advancing light. Science searches the glaciers of Switzerland and Greenland, and finds in them the history of past epochs, of enormous periods of time in which the world was making. Science deciphers the hieroglyphics of Egyptian tombs, and the wedges on the stones of Nineveh, and compares the roots of ancient languages, and digs up out of the

ground the stone hatchets and hammers of a primeval age, and so patiently reconstructs the history of a pre-Adamite race of men. These things also are words proceeding out of the mouth of God, which there is no need to be afraid of.

The best test of religious truth is that it feeds the soul. I once heard a man say to another, "You ought not to go to that church: they are heretics there." But the man, sagacious though uneducated, replied, "I know when I am fed." We need to pray to the Lord, "Feed me with food convenient for me." One man is best fed where there is a great deal of ritual and form and ceremony: that suits the state of mind he happens to be in. If he feels better for it, more devout, lifted above worldliness, that is the food convenient for him. Another is best suited by the greatest simplicity, by a Quaker-like absence of form. Let him worship that way, if he worships in spirit and in truth. One man can eat everything: "another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not: nor him that eateth not judge him that eateth."

The true food for the soul, in all churches, is the same. It is that which makes us feel God's presence and our responsibility, which arouses the conscience to a sense of duty, makes us feel the majesty of law, the evil of sin, the distinction between right and wrong. It is that which makes us also see the infinite tenderness and pity of our

heavenly Father, his readiness to help us in all our needs, his forgiving love and the comforting influence of his spirit. It is that which makes us find in Jesus a friend, brother, leader, teacher, guide; a Saviour from sin and evil, an inspiration and example for all good. Wherever and whenever we receive this, it is the word which comes from God's mouth.

Another word which proceeds out of the mouth of God is Goodness, and we live by the sight of goodness.

Wretched and starved is that soul which does not believe in good men and women. Starved is that theology which denies the reality of human truth and human love. Some men, who call themselves men of the world and think themselves wise, disbelieve in the reality of disinterested generosity and manly honesty. Better die, and hide in our graves from the sight of sun and sky, than hold such a wretched unbelief. One may blaspheme God and be pardoned. We cannot hurt God by anything we say against him. One may blaspheme Christ and be forgiven: so he himself has said. But not the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Goodness, not goodness itself, as God shows us goodness in man, woman, and child. He who blasphemes that has no forgiveness. He must expiate that sin by its natural punishment,—which is, to be alone in the cold, away from all truth and all love.

But, fortunately, not many fall into that her-

esy. We all of us have seen and known good men and women in whose lives some word of God's divine goodness spoke to our soul. What loyalty to truth have we not known in those who could suffer, but could not be false to their own convictions! What honest men have we not known, who could die, but would not deceive! What generous souls have we not been blessed with the sight of, ready to give time, thought, strength, means, to some good cause not their own, forgetting themselves in others! What pure hearts have we not known, Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile! Pure, unspotted infancy, childhood, youth, wearing their robes of simplicity and innocence, white as those of angels! Woe to us, if we doubt these things, in order to seem wise and knowing; for our life is fed out of these fountains of goodness, we live by these words of God.

High friendships, noble loves,—these are words which proceed out of the mouth of God. Not passion, not whim, not fancy; not a mere clinging habit of dependence. Poets compare love to the vine which clings to the elm, and so make dependence its essence. But love which is only dependence is not love. Love is giving and taking, finding and seeking again: it is not blind feeling, but clear sight of good. It is the eye of the seer, which can look through the surface to the centre of the soul and see its real capacities and qualities. False love sees only the surface, and

is the dupe of superficial qualities. But true and noble love looks to the soul itself and recognizes there the original word of God, the stamp and seal of an immortal essence; sees qualities and powers ordained from the foundation of the world, and so does not cling and depend, but reverences and admires. It does not weaken us, but strengthens us and teaches us how to give as well as to receive. It sees something immortal in the soul, and loving that, becomes itself immortal. Thus it is a source of life to us. We live by the sight and love of noble minds and hearts with whom we are allied in mutual confidence and help. What is life worth except we have friends? How starved and empty it is unless we can love and be loved! Thus it is also another word proceeding out of the mouth of God.

Grief, also, and death—solemn angels—come as words of God and make us live. "Dying, and behold we live." Defeated, baffled, cast down, disappointed, we find in all these seeming evils the seeds of a higher life. Luxury and continued prosperity are like the long summer's day, which takes our strength out of us. Adversity is the cold, healthy air of the mountain top, where among frozen glaciers and terrific precipices and awful abysses our power of body and presence of mind seem to increase. When the dearest friends go from us,—father, mother, child, wife,—behold! the heavens are opened. We are lifted to a grander vision and purpose. The angels sur-

round us. The air is full of holy memories and great hopes. What an inspiration comes from the sight of death and eternity! Our friends come back to us transfigured, "part of our life's unalterable good," "secure from change in their high-hearted ways." So we are lifted to a higher plane of being; and we find all loss and anguish and bereavement the words of God, by which we live.

Jesus tells us, as Moses before had said, that we live by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God. Thus he rebukes narrowness and bigotry, which would make him the only word of God. He wishes us to hear God's voice in nature, in history, in life, in friendship, in love, in life and death. We live a true life, we grow and become strong to do and bear, as we find something of God in all these,—something divine. Yet, most of all, is Jesus himself the Word of God. That wonderful life, so simple and natural, yet so deep and high; Son of God in its lofty communion with Deity, Son of Man in its tender sympathy with humanity; that life so brave that it unhesitatingly accepted every work as it came, yet so modest that it went by the lowliest ways and the simplest paths.

That life continues to be the bread of heaven and the food of the world. By it we live in faith and hope; we believe in God as near and helpful, though we do not see him; by that life God seems to us our father, and man appears to us a

brother; by the life of Jesus this world seems rich and good, and the next world better. As we feed on that life, we find it to be the best word of God, and we are nourished by it and made strong. Man eats angel's food. This is the bread which came down from heaven.

Prosaic Jews and prosaic Christians have wondered that Jesus should say, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." Prosaic Jews took it literally, and said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Prosaic Christians took it literally, also, and made a doctrine of Transubstantiation, and said that we eat Christ when we partake of the Lord's Supper. But this is not the only way of eating Christ. We eat the flesh of the Son of Man when we make his truth and his love a part of our own souls. We eat and drink Christ when we assimilate his life and make his spirit ours. Whenever we "are about our Father's business," whenever we pray that "God's kingdom may come" here below, whenever we go about doing good, whenever we rise above ceremony, creed, ritual, into communion with the living God, whenever we love and honor what Jesus loved and honored, and trust in God as he trusted in God, and have that large, far-reaching hope which he had, then we eat and drink Christ.

XIII

THE UNKNOWN GOD AND THE KNOWN GOD

"As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown God.'"—ACTS 17. 23.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."—JOHN 17. 3.

IN Rafaelle's cartoon of "Paul Preaching at Athens," the artist has perceived, with the intuition of genius, that this was one of the most picturesque moments in human history; moments in which the old and new meet together, and a new epoch begins for mankind. Paul preaching at Athens! In Athens the vast system of Polytheism had reached its highest point of development. Each of the gods of Greece was the deification of some particular human quality—some human faculty raised to its highest potency. Everything majestic and sublime in man was embodied in the Greek Jupiter; perfect wisdom in the Athenian Pallas; transendent genius in Phœbus Apollo; heavenly purity in the untouched Diana. These gods and goddesses, carved in ivory and gold by the matchless chisel of Phidias, were standing around Paul. Before him rose the majestic Parthenon in perfect proportions, the highest form

of pure art which architecture had reached, the centre of Athenian worship. This religion had its splendid ritual, with processions, sacrifices, festivals, mysteries. Its sacred scriptures were the noble poetry of Homer, Eschylus and Sophocles. To this world of Polytheistic culture the Jew comes and preaches Monotheism. In their Pantheon there was one place left for the worship of an unknown god. Thus they confessed that there were gods whom they did not know, and Paul seizes on this admission, and tells them of the one Supreme Being in whom all live and move and are. With a skilful hand he draws the picture of the all-embracing, all-protecting, all-inspiring Deity. The altar to the unknown God expressed the profoundest religious sentiment of the Greek mind, the sense of a vast unknown, whom no form could reveal, no words describe. They had made their gods like themselves, idealized men and women. But in their profounder thought they said, "Not what we know, but what we do not know, is truly divine."

The same feeling I suppose, has led to what is now called Agnosticism. Christian theology, though contending for supernaturalism, has often given to the Deity human habits of thought and action. It has given us theories of the divine character which puts him on a level lower than that often occupied by wise and good men. It talks of "plans of salvation" and "schemes of redemption" as though the infinite wisdom had

to plan and contrive as man contrives in order to get round a difficulty. It describes God as being angry with his creatures, as though anything we can do could possibly disturb the vast tranquillity of the Almighty mind. Instead of the immense order and the unchanging law which are above and around all, theologians introduce an element of caprice, or of pure will, interrupting the course of things, by miraculous intervention for petty purposes. If a person falls dead in a dance, or is drowned when sailing on Sunday, this is called a special providence, as though God interfered to punish Sabbath-breaking, but allowed the thousand acts of selfishness, falsehood, cruelty and license which corrupt society to go on unnoticed. No wonder that men accustomed to study the laws of the universe should turn from such a theological deity and worship with the vast unknown, the deep abyss of being, the unseen source of law, and, like the Athenians, build an altar with the inscription, "To the Unknown God."

A great deal may be said on that side of the question. As we are finite, our knowledge of God must be finite. But God is infinite, therefore our knowledge of him is infinitely less than the reality. Our highest conceptions sink into nothing before his majestic being. In thinking of him, silence is better than speech; for when we have said all, we have said nothing. Thus Job says, "How faint the whisper we have heard

of him; but the thunder of his power who can understand?" All sacred literature is full of expressions of man's ignorance of the ways of the Almighty. Is he not, then, in reality, the unknown God?

And yet the Scriptures also say that it is life eternal to know the only true God. Nor is it sufficient for the heart to adore an unknown and unknowable being. The heart and the flesh cry out for a living God; a God whom we can know, and upon whom we can rely; to whom we can call, out of the deep experiences of our life, and know that he hears us and will help us. This is the God who is needed by the human soul. In every form of religion men have looked up to such a friend and helper. Have they not had a right to do so? Do we, or do we not, know God?

Consider this, first; that an infinite being is not necessarily infinitely far off—he may be infinitely near. His greatness consists in the fact that he is present at every point of space, and with every creature he has made. An infinite being can and must be present everywhere, so that, as Jesus says, "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father." He is not only above all, but also through all things and in all things.

Nor does the greatness of God consist in being unknown to his intelligent universe, but much more in the power of revealing himself to his creation. If he were unable to reveal himself he

would be so far wanting in an attribute of deity. As it is the nature of the sun to shine, so it is the nature of spiritual light to manifest itself. God is the Word; that is, his very nature is speech, his very being is manifestation. He reveals himself in creation; the visible universe is a manifestation of his presence. Whenever the soul opens itself to the kindly influences of nature, and feels the ineffable beauty of such summer days as these; whenever we listen to the soft breezes which murmur in the tree-tops, to the happy voices of the birds and the glad leap of the brook, shattering in sunlight over the gray ledges of the rock, or rushing into the cool shadows of the overhanging trees, we have a sense of something more divine than these outward forms, some unspeakable beauty more than the visible and seen.

God reveals himself also in the great order of the universe. The universe is not a blinding storm, in which innumerable atoms are driven helplessly without aim or purpose. Instead of this, it is a web of law, all things bound together by plan, everywhere an adaptation of means to ends.

The sun revolves on its axis in the centre of a system of planets. By fixed and unchanging laws he holds them in their places; by unchanging laws they revolve in their vast orbits without haste or rest. There is no railroad track by which they travel, but they move on with such

precision that we can calculate where they will be a thousand years hence. The earth is the home of innumerable living creatures, a vast and complex system of organized existence, all depending on solar light and heat, on the exact temperature of the atmosphere, the exact composition of its chemical elements; just so much oxygen, hydrogen and carbon, no more and no less; just so much moisture in the air, so much nutriment in the soil. Then come in the wonderful laws by which plants unfold out of seeds, animals out of eggs, each after its kind; grasses and forests, vegetables and fruits, adapted to feed every living creature, with a curious complex organization adapted to this nourishment. Then we see the gradually ascending scale of being from plant to animal, from animal to man. What preserves this equilibrium, maintains this perfect balance, upholds this vast harmony? The agnostic says, "I do not know; possibly some presiding mind, perhaps some fatuitous concourse of matter." It is more modest he thinks, to admit our ignorance when we know nothing.

When the Waverley novels appeared their author was not known. The civilized world read them with delight. But suppose the agnostic had then said, "We do not know the author, we never saw him. Possibly these characters, these stories, have come from some inventive intellect—that is one view—or, possibly, from some fortuitous concourse of matter. Some one may

have put paper, pen and ink into a room, and the result has been 'The Antiquary,' 'Guy Mannering' and 'Rob Roy.' We do not know. It is more modest to admit our ignorance where we know nothing."

But what are the Waverley novels to that world which produces Waverley novels and Homeric poems and the literature of nations, which gives the vast ascending scale of being from the lowest type of infusorial life up to the heroes and sages, saints and martyrs? Shall we call it modesty, which looks on this cosmos of wisdom, beauty, power, and says, "I do not know whether there is mind behind it or not." It seems to me not modesty so much as childishness. When we are children we speak as children, but when we become men we are expected to know something.

Modesty is well, but faith, is also necessary in the hard struggle of human life. Trial and calamity come to all; hard duty is to be done, sharp sorrow is to be borne. The hero and the saint go forth to the great work they have to do, confident that they are serving God by their fidelity. This conviction enables them to do nobly and to bear patiently, to cling to the right when it is hard to do so. They labor to help their race, to free the slave, to rescue the victims of intemperance and temptation. In doing this they must oppose old abuses, they must attack vested interests. They are unpopu-

lar and lonely, hated of all men for the sake of Christ. But they bear up, sustained by the thought that God is on their side, and therefore the right must triumph. Then comes the agnostic and says, "What do we know about God? Who can tell if there is a God, or whether we shall ever live again?"

The hero, the reformer, the martyr, does not always have in his mind a conscious and clear sense of God's help. He may not pray to God in set words. But Christ has so brought God into the world, he has made the divine presence in all things so much a part of our unconscious belief, that we are supported by that faith when we do not know it. The world is full of a divine presence even to those who doubt or deny the existence of the Almighty. Faith in an infinite justice, a perfect love, above all things; of a vast wisdom guiding all things, has become a part of the instinctive belief of Christendom. Scientific searchers, who wish to see nothing but the working of law, without design, nevertheless are obliged to use language which indicates a belief in final causes. They say "This organ was intended for such a use; the purpose of such an arrangement was to fulfil such ends." And, in the same way, those who in speculation are atheists often have a habit of faith in a divine love and care which they never outgrow.

When the civil war came, and our young men at the North left their happy homes, their fair

prospects in life, to expose themselves to hardships and death for their country, it is possible that they did not always say to themselves, "We go trusting in God's strength, to do his work." But if they did not know God, they were known of him. His strength and peace was in their hearts, and he gave them the power to do their duty, relying on an unseen aid. Generations of Christian teaching had given them the spiritual instinct which looks from pleasure to duty, from what is profitable to what is right. And so they bear witness to the truth of the poet's words:

> " So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When duty whispers low ' Thou must,'
> The youth replies ' I can.' "

The unconscious knowledge of God is good, but it is not enough. We need, not only to know God, but to know that we know him. This is life eternal, this fills the soul with spiritual life.

The intellect needs to know God in order to be able to understand the mysteries of the universe, to find behind all creation its primal cause, beneath all changing phenomena their unchanging essence, back of all the surface beauty of things their all-bountiful source.

The conscience needs to know God, that it may perceive an infinite justice below all that seems false and evil; a perfect goodness, towards

which all wrong tends as its solution; a revelation of righteousness to come. Believing in this, we can be patient and endure the present evil and wrong, sure that all things are working together for ultimate good.

And the heart needs to know God as the all-Beautiful and all-Good, the source of whatever is tender and lovable in this world. Otherwise our most beautiful ideals are only bubbles on the stream of accident, a mere cheat, a deception of the flying hours. Love comes and goes, but unless God is in all, earthly love is unsubstantial.

Without God the world is a great void, a vast emptiness, an infinite disorder. There is nothing permanent to reverence, to love, to worship, to trust, only blind forces, only dead laws. The stream of human history flows by, tending nowhere. Dark Fate sits, a gloomy sphinx, by the wayside; the desert sands drift over it for centuries, and no answer comes to our questioning heart. To be without God is to be without hope in the world.

But when we come to know that we know God we have immortal life abiding in us. Then the soul is alive through and through. Then sunshine returns to our days, strength to our will, activity to our intellect, satisfaction to our heart. Then we have a Father who loves us, and in whom we can trust. As we seek to do his will, and depend on his providence, we know him more and more, until at last he becomes as real to us as that

all-surrounding nature which is his manifestation. Every earnest purpose, every trusting prayer, brings us nearer to him. We have the evidence and witness of his being within our soul. As the shadows of night vanish with the coming dawn, so our doubt and unbelief disappear as we live from God for man.

XIV

BE NOT WEARY IN WELL-DOING

"And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."—GAL. vi. 9.

IF in the time of the apostles this advice was wanted, how much more is it needed now! Then all the facts of Christianity were fresh and recent. Then the gospel was a new thing, with its original halo of glory still hanging around it. Then the dew had scarcely dried from the grass where Jesus took his morning walk at Bethany; his blood had scarcely dried on Mount Calvary. Then the Gospels were still unwritten, and their contents were repeated from mouth to mouth among believers. Then, if you went to a Christian meeting, you might be introduced to an apostle just arrived from Jerusalem; you might hear him relate a parable or wonder of Jesus, of which you had never heard before. Then the church was warm with its early love; it was in its first spring-time of faith and hope. It was still a united and active body. Bigotry had not yet hardened it; sectarianism had not divided it; formality had not frozen its life; superstition had not tormented it with cruel terrors. And yet it seems that men were already weary; that they

already wondered at the slow progress of the gospel; that James was obliged to tell them to "be patient unto the coming of the Lord, as the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it"; that Peter must tell them that "the Lord was not slack concerning his promises," and that "one day with him is as a thousand years"; and the Apostle Paul must exhort them not to be weary in well-doing, for in due season they should reap if they did not faint. If they became weary then, how much more natural is it that we should sometimes grow weary now! If they were astonished that they did not reap the Christian harvest in fifty years, how much more may we be discouraged at the end of eighteen hundred years! If they wondered then that the world was not converted, how much more natural to wonder that it is not converted now! At that time Christian truth was new and fresh: now it has lost its freshness by formalities and endless repetitions. We have read the Bible over and over, till its words have become familiar; we have listened to the loftiest truths till their motive power seems exhausted; we have labored to improve society, and it scarcely seems to be any better than it was at first. And so we are discouraged; and therefore we need not only to be told not to be weary, but still more to be shown how we may escape weariness.

In the world there are tired people, and those

who seem never to tire. Let us consider them.

Life itself seems a weariness to some persons. They go about its work with languor and indifference. They take no apparent interest in what they do. They do everything as a matter of routine, but with no enthusiasm, no ardor, no joy.

Sometimes, singularly enough, people are a little proud of this weariness. They regard it as a distinction to take no interest in anything. It seems to them to indicate a certain superiority never to feel any enthusiasm or ardor. I once read a novel in which the chief superiority of the hero appeared to be that he was always a little weary. The writer apparently thought that to be *blasé* and prematurely tired of life was a proof of genius. The young man had lived some twenty or thirty years, and considered God's world no longer worthy of his attention.

I have observed that some persons regard it as evidence of special distinction to take this tone toward the universe. Their experience is so large that they can be surprised by nothing; they have had such a range of life that they can no longer admire anything. So they walk to and fro, or stand or sit, with this air of indifference. They seem to say with the Roman emperor, "*Omnia fui, nihil expedit.*"

In much of our literature, it is deemed a mark of wisdom and depth not to admire. In some periodicals, this spirit of condescension is the chief stock in trade. The writer poses himself

on all occasions as one far too wise and knowing to expect anything great or good. There is a sort of cheap wisdom in thus simply looking down on all efforts and enterprises.

Some people become tired of trying to do good. They begin with great purposes of benevolence, with large schemes of philanthropy; but their plans fail, their schemes break down, and at last they say, "It is of no use." A reaction from philanthrophy to discouragement often takes place, because the philanthropy was vague and extravagant in its expectations, not considering difficulties, expecting immediate success, not counting the cost. This is the sort of philanthropy which sometimes ends in sad or cynical despair of men. It thinks it has grown wise because, having had a blind faith in man, it has gone into an equally blind contempt of man. It says that all men are ungrateful, that they cannot be helped, that they must help themselves. Now, the true faith is equally distant from this foolish hope and this equally foolish despair. The true man says: "I will do what I can. I do not expect to convert the world to-day or to-morrow. I do not expect the millennium this week or next. But I can do *some* good every day, and that I am bound to do." Such a purpose of doing good is liable to no reaction: it goes on from good to better. And we find men and women who have at last acquired more and more power of usefulness; who are able to help

others by their thoughts, their speech, their total being; who are a light and a blessing wherever they go, wherever they are; and who make the kingdom of God come in the world. When the disciples asked Christ about the signs of his coming, he did not give them any enthusiastic hopes. He told them to follow him, if they were willing to take up the cross and be persecuted by all men, to do good, hoping for nothing again, to be paid with hatred for love; for his coming was not to be found in calm, sunny days, but amid earthquakes, tempests, and storms. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." He knew that Peter would deny him, yet said, "On this rock I will build my church." He knew that the disciples would forsake him, yet he was prepared to send them into the world to preach the gospel to every creature.

Persons often go into churches which have fixed creeds, because of an intellectual weariness. They want something stable, something permanent. They do not like to be perpetually asking the same questions, always digging up their beliefs by the roots. To be forever investigating anew fundamental principles as open questions—such as the existence of the soul, the existence of God, of immortality, of Christian faith—is not wise. I do not wonder that men of a practical character become tired and say, "Is not something to be considered settled as a foundation to

stand upon and work from?" Speculation is a good thing, but it may come in the wrong place and time. Sometimes it would seem well to suspend speculation for the sake of action. Some people soon become tired of thinking, tired of seeking the truth. Socrates mentions those of his day whom he calls reason-haters, because, having sought for truth and not found it, they had become discouraged, and given up all hope of finding it. The man who is weary in seeking for truth either becomes a sceptic, and denies that there is any truth, or else accepts some creed ready made to his hand, and holding it by his will, becomes a bigot. Scepticism and bigotry equally result from weariness in seeking for truth, and are at bottom the same thing.

Walking on the beach last week, I saw a large specimen of sea-weed which had been washed ashore; and I observed it had clasped its roots firmly to a stone. It got no nutriment from the stone; but it was anchored by it, and that was enough. So some people anchor themselves by a creed of a church, which does not feed them, but at least keeps them from drifting. And sometimes, as in the case of my poor weed, that anchorage does not hold; and they get washed ashore, after all.

While there are so many weary people in the world, there is another class who are never weary of well-doing. We find them everywhere, in all ranks of society, in all denominations of believers.

Nothing discourages them, nothing wears out their patience. There have been generals, like Hannibal, Washington, Frederic the Great, who were never so dangerous as after a defeat; all whose powers seemed to be increased tenfold by increasing difficulties. So, in the warfare of life, the soul will sometimes rise on the ruins of its hopes, on the destruction of its most cherished expectations, happier in the midst of disappointment than others in success. Such persons are never weary. Life is always new to them. Every day dawns full of new hope and expectation. We have known men eighty to ninety years old to whom life was always new, fresh, and fair,—

> "The world's unwithered countenance
> Was fresh as at Creation's day."

They are never desponding, never tired, nor weary of doing good; never tired of improvement, though not seeming to themselves to make much progress. They forget things behind and press forward continually. No weariness in their work, no fatigue in their face, no languor in their voice, their expression kindles with faith and hope. In the great evils of life, they have doubtless had their share,—in loss of friends, in failure, in disappointment; but they have risen from these trials, buoyant as the bark that rides the stormy sea.

It is a great thing to be able to hold on. The

world is full of proverbs and maxims to illustrate the importance of persistence in well-doing. There is the old fable of the hare and the tortoise. In the long run, those who have patience to hold on are apt to succeed.

Especially is this true in the culture of the soul and in the work of Christianity. The writer to the Hebrews says, "We have become partakers with Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end."

People are often weary of well-doing because evil seems more successful than good, because cunning and trickery conquer simple truth and honesty. Audacity often triumphs in this world. The modest are shoved aside, while those who claim everything are apt to get what they demand. The people are led by noisy demagogues, and lose sight of their real friends. So men say, What is the use of doing good? "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for all day long I have been chastened, and afflicted every morning." So said the Psalmist; and he found his comfort in discovering that this apparent success of fraud and audacity was very short-lived, and soon ended in unexpected disaster. So it usually does. But suppose not. Is there not some satisfaction in doing right and being right, even if no outward success follows it? Is not self-satisfaction something? Are not peace and content something? Can we not trust in God that, if we do our duty,

stand up for truth, and cleave to right, whether men hear or whether they forbear, he can make our efforts tell? The great souls of history have not met with easy success. Oftener they have had to struggle with defeat and disaster, to be baffled in their noblest efforts. Think of Socrates, the noblest man of his time, after spending a long life in teaching the highest truths to the Athenians, put to death on the charge of corrupting the youth of Athens. But what was that to him? "Anytus and Melitus may kill me," said he, "but they cannot hurt me." Think of the Apostle Paul pursued wherever he went by mean bigots, by crazy zealots, who perverted his disciples, and brought things to such a pass that, after having devoted years of labor to build up churches in Asia Minor, he was obliged at last, when old, in prison and lonely, to say, "All in Asia have deserted me." But did he give up in consequence,—did he say it was of no use? No! Instead of that, he forgot the things behind and pressed on to those before, satisfied because, whether he succeeded or failed, he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." And so at last it has happened that these chance letters of his have become the sacred Scriptures of mankind, his thoughts the inspiration of great reformers, his memory enshrined in the hearts of all who love God, truth, freedom, and virtue. And think of Jesus, accused of being in league with Satan,

charged with blasphemy, called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, beaten and mocked at, and put to a death of dreadful anguish. He and his cause seemed forever lost. But it turned out otherwise. He made himself a servant; he gave his heavenly thoughts to teach the ignorant, his divine soul to help and save the sinful. Wherefore, God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things above and below, and all mankind at last adore him as the great teacher and friend of humanity, to the glory of God, the Father.

Is it not honor enough, happiness enough, to follow in these great footprints of immortal truth and undying love? What matters it whether we seem to-day or to-morrow to be unsuccessful? We know that all things work together for good for those who love God; that, when we are in the right way, all things are ours, whether Paul, Apollos, or Peter, life or death, things present or things to come. A thousand unseen powers are always working on the side of truth.

People are weary of well-doing because they do not find themselves making any spiritual progress. But what if we do not see any progress or improvement in ourselves? Perhaps it is better that we should not see it. We might be too soon contented. Let us learn to have faith in God. Let us be sure that he will make us succeed if we continue to trust in him. It is a great mis-

take to be always looking at ourselves, watching ourselves. Let us look to God, to truth, to infinite beauty. If we can only put two mites of honest work into the heavenly treasury, let us do that.

The one great thing we all need to keep us from being weary is faith in the divine Presence and divine Love. Those who look at the things seen and temporal are easily discouraged, not those who look at the things unseen and eternal. The greatest blessing we can have in this world is to believe in the goodness and love of God to all his creatures. This is the gospel which Jesus brought to a weary world. When he came, the earth seemed to have lost all hope. The iron power of Rome had laid its fetters on the world, and freedom seemed forever dead. Greece had run through its splendid course of thought, and had exhausted itself; its genius was lifeless. Sophists had taken the place of thinkers, and the philosophers of Athens could not take interest enough in Paul's gospel to hear it to the end.

But Christianity brought new hope to men. It was a new sun rising on the world. It filled life full of the presence of God. It taught men to say in their hearts, "Abba, Father." It taught them that every creature is God's child. It taught that, in the midst of sorrow and disappointment, we may still hope in his divine providence and perfect love. It taught that we have a friend, who has passed upward into life, and who ever liveth

to make intercession for us. It taught that, when we were sinners, Christ died for us; that he did not wait till we were saints; that he loves us now just as we are; and that, if we make up our minds once for all to live for truth and right, for goodness, for love, we need never be weary, for a fountain of perpetual hope will rise in our hearts.

Bodily weariness is bad enough, but weariness of the soul is a worse disease still. If we are living without hope in the world, it shows that we are living without God. When we feel the presence of the divine life in nature around and the soul within, feel sure that we can trust in the infinite Friend now and always, then we feel that we have found the fountain of perpetual youth; then we are never weary of life, of work, of doing good, of seeking improvement. This is the sunshine in which all things grow. This is the blessed rain and dew which waters the human heart, and makes it bud and blossom in ever renewed vigor.

XV

DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED

"Our brethren have discouraged our heart."— DEUT. 1. 28.

"Fathers, provoke not your children that they be not discouraged."— COL. 3. 21.

To be discouraged is to lose one's energy and vitality. When a man is discouraged he is of no use; his power has gone out of him. Therefore, the familiar lines are not far wrong which say:

> "Courage gone, all gone,
> Better never have been born."

Courage is a large and noble quality, and necessary in all the relations of life. It is not merely shown in the boldness which confronts danger and is self-possessed in peril. It also is needed to face other difficulties promptly, to do one's duty cheerfully when the hope of success is small; to stand alone for the truth and right; not to be discouraged by disappointment, nor by the censures and reproofs of the hostile, nor by the indifference of the unsympathizing. In short, courage is the quality which is opposed to all discouragement.

One of the passages I have read advises parents not to discourage their children. You would

say beforehand, that there was not much need of that recommendation. Why should parents discourage their children? You might think that it is the parents who are apt to be discouraged by their children. Parents do everything they can for their children, provide them with all the means of progress, give them the best education, put them into a good business, open to them a career of usefulness, and then the children sometimes throw away these advantages by idleness, by choosing bad companions, by getting into needless and foolish difficulties, wasting their time, neglecting their opportunities, and so becoming a discredit to themselves and their friends. In such cases, it is the children who discourage the parents, not the parents who discourage the children.

And yet Paul spoke from a profound insight and keen observation. Parents do not intend to discourage their children. But they sometimes do so unintentionally, by not being able to put themselves in the place of the children. Parents and teachers often imagine that all children are alike, and think that what one is able to do another ought to do. But children differ in their organization, and some find it hard to accomplish what is to others easy. Nor do the children themselves understand what the difficulty is. Parents and teachers are too apt to assume that when a child does not do as he is told, or as he ought to do, he is wilfully disobedient. So, they think

that they ought to punish the child, or, at any rate, they show that they are offended and hurt by the child's behavior. But when the mysterious and complex chords of a child's mind are jangled and out of tune, he does not know why, but he cannot do the thing he would. There is a temporary moral derangement of his faculties. Your watch will occasionally stop for no good reason that you can perceive. Then it begins to go again as well as before. But the machinery of a watch is far less intricate and delicate than the motor forces of the human soul. I think a great many children have been discouraged because they could not learn their lessons, and were called stupid and thought themselves so, when perhaps a little pains taken by parents or friends would have tided them over the difficulty. And many have been thought obstinate and perverse when all they needed was sympathy, patience and kindness to help them out of the transient mood of bad temper into which they had fallen. When they are discouraged they give up all attempt to do better. Do we not all remember having had just such feelings when we were children? We needed to be encouraged, not blamed.

No wonder people admire courage. It is indispensable to nobleness of life. How much courage some men and women display in taking on themselves new responsibilities, in going promptly to perform untried and difficult duties, in keeping up the struggle of life amid many discour-

agements. Courage is a virtue needed by women no less than by men. How many poor women there are in this city; widows, perhaps, or worse than widows, who work on to support their families, rising early and going late to bed, and eating the bread of care. They keep their children neat, keep them at school, exhaust every contrivance to maintain themselves, try every possible means of overcoming the daily difficulties of life, and so hold on, year after year, when strong men might have been discouraged and have given up. I think as much heroism is shown every day in such ways, as by the soldiers who hold an important position in a battle against overwhelming odds.

There is no more important work in this world, no greater duty, than to help others to keep up their courage. I consider it the chief duty of the Christian pulpit to encourage those whom life discourages. I think every Sunday should inspire us with new heart for work; every sermon and act of worship renew our energy and put fresh enthusiasm into our souls for the great battle of existence. He is our best friend whose words of cheerful confidence give more life to our heart, and he is our enemy who, by his words of doubt and his spirit of fear, saps this ardor and takes from us our courage.

And yet how many there are whose habit it is to look at the dark and discouraging side of life. They dwell on the faults and follies of men; they

retail every petty scandal they hear; they exaggerate the amount of evil in the world; they suggest a low and selfish motive as the root of good actions; they quench the ardor of generous enthusiasm by a cold scepticism. Whenever we have talked with such persons we have been inclined to say, "Our brethren have discouraged our heart."

Perhaps you will answer, "But if the evil *is* there, why not see it? Shall we shut our eyes to the actual folly and sin of the world? Shall we deceive ourselves by rose-colored views of life, which experience will contradict? Is not the truth that which we need, no matter how discouraging it may be? Is not an unfounded or an excessive hope the very source of a greater discouragement afterward? Socrates tells us that a misanthrope is often a discouraged philanthropist, who, because he began by thinking too well of men, ends by thinking too badly of them. To see all the evil, danger and risk beforehand is the best preparation for any enterprise, for it saves us from subsequent disappointment."

This is no doubt true. The sight of the evil and danger will make us prudent and cautious, and prevent us from being carried away by unfounded hopes and a too sanguine and credulous expectation. The most courageous general needs to know the power of his enemy.

But though the knowledge of evil is necessary to make us cautious and prudent, it is the sight

of the good which gives us courage and energy to attack the evil. The inspiration which gives us power does not come from that habit of mind which dwells on evil, but on the opposite habit which loves to look at good. Not the contemplation of error and wrong, but the sight of truth and righteousness, puts strength into the heart and enables us to fight on and fight always, through evil report and good report, through success and failure, to the end. Everything great, noble, generous and brave comes from keeping in sight this heavenly ideal, this supreme glory and beauty which descends from God into all hearts that trust him.

The great danger, therefore, is of being discouraged by dwelling exclusively or mainly on the dark side of the world; for this ends in despondency, apathy and moral indifference.

To work without hope is discouraging. We need the sense of progress to cheer and sustain us. To go round and round in a treadmill of mere drudgery takes our spirit out of us. Therefore we need a deeper and larger hope. We need to have faith in mental, moral and spiritual progress; in the growth of the soul; in the unfolding of its higher powers, its larger faculties. We need to have faith that the years, as they come and go, may give us a deeper experience, may lift us to a larger vision, may enable us to come nearer to God in faith, nearer to man in human sympathy and love.

When we have this sense of spiritual progress, we can bear outward disappointments more easily, sure that pain and sorrow may work for our highest good.

But suppose we have no such sense of spiritual progress; that we do not seem to be growing wiser or better as the years pass by; that we even often find ourselves, in some respects, worse than we were; that our conscience is not as sensitive, our purpose to do right not so fixed, our aim not as high. This is the most discouraging fact of all.

I suppose that this is the very time when faith in Christ comes to our help. When we find nothing in ourselves on which to lean, Christ teaches us to lean more entirely on the pardoning grace of God and God's spiritual help. We have this treasure of goodness in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. When we are weak, then we are strong. So it was that the apostle felt when he said, "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

The meaning of the gospel of Jesus is this: that he does not come as a physician to those who are whole, but to those who are sick. He comes to the poor in spirit; to the spiritually poor; to those who find little in themselves in which to trust. He speaks to these of the infinite fatherly love, of the perfect providence, of

him whose will it is that no one of his little ones should perish; he comes to say to him who is discouraged, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee"; to bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted, and open the eyes of the blind that they may see the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Everywhere else we see law, inexorable though beneficent law. Over all the face of nature unchanging, benignant law presides, rewarding good, punishing evil. Everywhere the vast order of the universe is based on law. Jesus does not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them both by a deeper insight. He comes to show us that while law forever punishes and rewards according to conduct and character, there is also a help given to the poorest and weakest, by which they can, if they will, find new strength and hope in the ever-present love of the universal Father.

Jesus comes to us all to say, "Do not be discouraged. Never be discouraged." Though evil may abound, and the love of many grow cold, though we see no way out of surrounding difficulties, though even our brethren discourage our heart by their gloomy forebodings, and abandon the good cause, leaving us alone, still, let us never be discouraged. The Lord reigns. Chance does not reign. Fate does not reign. Bad men do not reign. He reigns who forever educes lasting good out of transient evil. It is this perfect trust in a divine Providence that gives us

new power and prevents us from being discouraged. "Wait on the Lord. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart."

Do not be discouraged about public affairs. In this country we have the least reason to fear; for experience here shows us that, in the long run, things come right. Courage can here overcome the worst dangers. How many crises has this nation passed through even in my own lifetime, and come out of them all safely. Our brethren may sometimes discourage our heart by taking what seems to us the wrong way. But the second sober thought of the nation brings things right again. As long as speech is open, thought free, the press unshackled, truth is sure to be mighty and to prevail.

Do not be discouraged because there seems so much to be done. If there is a great deal given us to do, there is plenty of time given us wherein to do it. Do you remember Mrs. Barbauld's ingenious story of "The Discontented Pendulum"? She tells us that one night the pendulum of the kitchen clock began to calculate how often it would have to swing back and forward, and found that it must oscillate 3,600 times every hour, and 86,400 times ever day. This discouraged it, and it had concluded to stand still. Then it reflected that, though it had to tick once every second, it always had a second in which to tick. How often people say, in looking back on their past trials, "If I had known beforehand what I have had to

bear, I should have despaired. I could not have borne it." No. And, therefore, we do not know beforehand. Happy for us that we do not. With each new trial comes new strength; and we are gently lifted over our struggles and sorrows by an ever-present Providence of wisdom and love.

Do not be discouraged in doing good. It may often seem as if you accomplished very little, as if, with all your efforts, you cannot effectually help those whom you wish to serve. When you lift them up, they fall again. You may even sometimes find that your very help seems to do them harm. They relax their own efforts and lean on you. Then comes the danger of thinking that all effort is useless, that to endeavor to aid the inefficient is always to discourage the laborious, and that the stern laws of retribution should be left to work out their own remedy.

But I believe we have, not merely to help ourselves, but to help each other. We may often make mistakes. We may sometimes do harm. But the greatest mistake of all would be to stand aloof from human sorrow. It was no mistake when Jesus came to seek and save those who were lost, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring comfort to the forlorn. It was no mistake when he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Best of all blessings is that human love, that generous sympathy which puts itself in the place of the

sufferer, and gives him the comfort of knowing that he is not alone in the world, not forgotten by his fellow-men. The good of this is never lost.

And let us not be discouraged by the amount of suffering, sin, and crime which we see around us. Always remember that these evils come to the surface, while the good is hidden. Self-indulgence parades itself before our eyes, while self-denial does not appear unto men to fast. Hypocrisy prays at the corner of the streets, while piety goes into its closet. Dishonesty plunders, and is exposed, and all men hear of it. But honesty sounds no trumpet when it is faithful in the least things and in the greatest. The demagogue parades himself before our eyes, but the patriot does his work silently. If the vast majority of men did not tell the truth, keep their promises, hold fast to honesty, society would dissolve and become a heap of sand. Be not discouraged, then, because you see and hear so much of what is evil in the world, but be sure that the good is much more widespread and more powerful.

Thus we see that we cannot live without courage, and that courage comes to us from faith in things unseen and eternal. Courage comes to us from faith in an infinite Providence guiding all things aright, and making all things work together for good. Courage comes from knowing that when we stand by what is true and right, all the great powers of the universe are working with us. When we feel our own weakness, courage

comes to us by remembering that God cares for our soul, and wishes to save us from our sins. Courage comes to us when we remember that evil is transient and good permanent, that error is fleeting and that truth is eternal, that God is on the side of all things just, honest, pure, and noble. Then we can say with the poet:

"That more and more a Providence
Of Love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good.

"That care and trial seem at last
In memory's sunset air
Like mountain ranges overpast
In purple distance fair.

"That all the jarring notes of life
Are blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

"And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play,
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day."

XVI

REJOICE EVERMORE

"Rejoice evermore."—1 Thess. v. 16.

This seems a simple and intelligible requisition, and yet it involves some difficulties. Why should we rejoice all the time? Are there not sad hours as well as glad ones in life? Is it suitable to rejoice at our own misfortunes or sins? Is it right to rejoice at the misfortunes or sins of others? Can we rejoice in hours of national disaster, or when the news comes of terrible accidents to our fellow-creatures? Shall we rejoice when evil triumphs and right is defeated? Shall we be glad when cunning or knavery succeed and honesty fails? Shall we be thankful when the government of the country or city is in the hands of spoilsmen? when iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold? If there is a time to rejoice, is there not also a time to mourn? Why, then, should we rejoice evermore?

If, when our hearts are saddened by calamity, we try to rejoice, will it not argue levity or unseasonable mirth? Is not seriousness an important part of life? Such are some of the difficulties which our text suggests.

And, if we could rejoice always, what good would this do? Why ought we to rejoice?

Ought the disciples to have rejoiced when Jesus was being crucified? He said beforehand that then they would weep and lament, but the world would rejoice. His enemies might rejoice, but not his friends.

In short, what is the good of perpetual joy? On what ground does the apostle say here, "Rejoice evermore," and elsewhere, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice"? It is certain that the whole tone of the New Testament is the same. It teaches a religion of joy all through. Jesus begins his first sermon by declaring the poor in spirit, the meek, the pure in heart, the sufferers, the needy, the persecuted, to be blessed. He reaches down to those who mourn and who are oppressed, and declares them to be supremely happy. The very word "gospel" means "good news." His kingdom was to bring such joy to men that it was announced by angels as giving peace to earth and being a blessing to mankind. Joy is the pervading element in the teaching of Jesus. It is a religion of trust, hope, blessed anticipation, comfort, and peace.

We must, however, see that Jesus does not teach any pure optimism in the sense of ignoring evil. Evil was to him something so real and terrible that it were better to cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye, than yield to it. He teaches us to ask every day that we shall not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil. He sees sin as a dark background, making

life not gloomy indeed, but very serious. In this life, evil is to be opposed constantly, untiringly, and with all our force. But, to do this, we must work in faith, not doubt; in hope, not fear. To have courage to oppose evil, we must hope to conquer it. We are soldiers; and we must fight on the side of truth, justice, goodness, against falsehood and wrong. But soldiers who have lost their courage are demoralized and are already defeated. Jesus saw all the evil; saw the power of temptation; saw that, when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; saw his approaching death, the disciples' desertion, the traitor's betrayal. But, below it all, he saw the foundation of rock, the great principle that God reigns, and that, therefore, truth and good must triumph. And this filled the depths of his soul with that central joy which causes the four Gospels to be full of sunshine. Many religious books are sad; many religious people are gloomy. But there is no gloom in the New Testament. It is full of good news to mankind, and bright with trust and hope.

But when Paul says, "Rejoice alway," he does not mean a constant outward expression of joy. He does not mean that we should be always smiling, always gay, forever saying, "How glad I am!" Joy, like all other Christian graces, is in the depth of the soul, not on the surface. It is being, not appearance. It is in the spirit, not the letter. To "pray without ceasing" does not mean that we should be always saying our pray-

ers, but to be always near God in spirit, feeling our dependence on him, and able to turn to him for comfort and strength whenever we need it. If we were always "saying our prayers," we should not be able to attend to our duties. So, to keep the Sabbath is not to abstain outwardly from all work, but chiefly to have rest in the soul. We may have work we ought to do on Sunday, but we ought always to have rest and peace within. There is no safe rule for keeping Sunday but this,—so to spend its hours as to be refreshed in soul and body for our coming duties. Christ does not give a system of outward rules for our behavior, but gives the spirit which shows itself in all conduct and character. To "rejoice always," therefore, means to have the spirit of joy deep down in the soul, a current of life running below the surface. And this comes from faith in divine goodness, and hope that all things will end at last in good.

Here is a man who, with all outward means of happiness, is not happy. No matter what his success in life is, he is dissatisfied. We see it in his face, we hear it in the tones of his voice. He has no faith in human progress, no trust in the future of mankind. He sees the wrongs and evils and faults in all men and all things, except in himself. He is a self-appointed censor and critic, a sharp and a hard judge of others. He is inwardly in a state of unrest. His deepest life is morbid, because he has no assured hope.

And here is another, outwardly unsuccessful, with many trials and bitter sorrows. This may give a serious aspect to his face and a tone of gravity to his voice. Outwardly he may not seem to have much gladness or joy. Yet his look is serene; his voice composed; he does not complain. He brings strength and courage with him wherever he goes. He has joy deep down in his heart,—the joy of faith and hope; and this makes his presence a comfort and a pleasure.

If we trace this spirit of joy to its profound source in the soul, we shall find that it comes from a hope of better things in the future than we have in the present. It is the spirit of hope toward God; hope full of immortality, which rejoices in the coming glory of God; hope born of experience; hope which makes not ashamed. It is hope which inspires courage, which is the spring of progress, without which progress will never take place.

God gives to children a great stock of hope, and thus of gladness. Every day dawns to the child, filled with expectation. He goes forth to his daily tasks or daily plays full of hope, and thus full of courage. He rejoices in hope.

See the joy of hope in the lives of inventors. They often have a hard time: they sow, and others reap. But to invent is itself a delight. Alvan Clark, who has recently died, the inventor of the best way of making telescopes, had a constant expression of satisfaction on his counte-

nance. He had learned how to make the most perfect lenses; and he had completed the five largest and finest telescopes in the world,—that at Washington, the one at Chicago, the one ordered by the Emperor of Russia, the one ordered by the King of Portugal, and that for the Lick Observatory in California. I do not know that this success brought him any large fortune; but it brought him a happy life, up to eighty years of age.

The reformer rejoices in hope. He is ridiculed, bitterly opposed, often fails, but is never discouraged, never unhappy. It has been my fortune to know many reformers in my life, ardent philanthropists,—like Sumner, Garrison, Dr. Howe, Governor Andrew; and all were happy men. Persecuted, they were not forsaken; cast down, they were not destroyed.

Take, as another illustration of this point, the characters of Carlyle and Emerson. These two friends differed widely intellectually, and still more in character. They had in common a supreme love of truth, a hatred of shams and insincerities, a belief in the supremacy of justice and right. The activity and difference of their intellectual tendencies were a mutual stimulus and a constant gratification. Each had a profound esteem for the other's genuine qualities. But they were counterparts in their intelligence and supplements in character. Emerson had the keenest insight, glances which penetrated to the

centre, but no method or continuity in his thought. Carlyle was a master of method, could exhaust a subject, and conquer it by logical approaches. Carlyle was a born critic, giving admirable portraits of men and things. Emerson was often wrong in his criticisms, thinking, for instance, that Shelley was no poet. Emerson was pure, calm thought, hardly disturbed by affection or prejudice,—cold and clear as Alpine snow. Carlyle was filled with heat and prejudice, with devoted reverence for his heroes, with scorn and contempt for those who were not to his taste. But deeper than these differences were the differences in the undercurrents of their lives. Both believed in the supreme grandeur of truth and justice; but Carlyle despaired of their triumph, while Emerson never doubted for a moment that they would conquer. Hence the radical discontent of Carlyle, his permanent dissatisfaction, his savage access of contempt for his fellow-men, the impossibility he found of living in peace with himself or others. And hence the serene calm of Emerson, his cheer, his sweetness, his benign human kindliness, his modesty and manly confidence in God and man. The undertone of Carlyle was sadness; that of Emerson, joy. Emerson rejoiced evermore in hope. Carlyle was made miserable because without hope.

We shall notice a like contrast, if less marked, between the two great living poets of England, Tennyson and Browning. Tennyson has ac-

quired a great reputation and a title; his poetry has been admired by the world; and yet he finds the world going wrong and the times out of joint. His faith has failed him in his later years. But Browning has never ceased to believe in the providence of God and the law of progress. His keen insight has shown us all sorts of human weaknesses and villainies; but he still has trust in humanity and in a divine guidance of the world. Therefore, his poetry becomes more and more inspired with joy and with a confident expectation of good. He also rejoices in hope.

There is a striking passage in a letter from Rousseau to Voltaire which throws light upon this subject. Voltaire had written a book to show that this world is, on the whole, a bad one, full of misery and evil. Rousseau wrote an answer, in which he maintains that there is much more joy than sorrow in life; and in this answer occurs the following passage:

"*You*, Voltaire, live surrounded by wealth and abundance. You are surfeited with glory, sure of an immortality of fame. You philosophize in peace on the nature of the soul. Yet you find only evil here below. *I*, an obscure man, poor, tormented with an incurable disease, enjoy life in my retreat, and find only good in the world. Whence this strange contrast? You yourself have explained the seeming contradiction. *You* enjoy; I hope! And *hope* makes all things beautiful."

There is no inconsistency between seriousness and joy. The most serious joys are the deepest. Such is the joy of noble struggle for good objects,—the conflict of right against wrong; the devotion of the patriot ready to die for his country; the self-sacrifice of the generous giver, whose aim is to help his neighbor. These are all serious, earnest; and they confirm the words of the wisest man of our age, who says, "Earnestness alone gives value to life."

Nor is the best joy that which shuns the thought of evil. It comes from no superficial optimism, which ignores or underrates the miseries of the world. It sees them, feels them, but has faith that they can be overcome.

What a cheerful tone pervades the Gospels! Yet what more serious than the teaching of Jesus! To him sin was the great evil which he came to encounter, from which he was to save mankind. He came to seek and to save the lost. But his words are full of cheer; they abound in hope. I have sometimes gone into a church where I heard denunciations of error and sin, descriptions of the wrath of God against sinners, gloomy pictures of future judgment and retribution. Going home, I have opened the New Testament, and found myself in another climate,—one of hope, courage, glad inspiration. I found myself near to my God, whose sun shines on the evil and good,—near to a heavenly Father, who loves all his children, who sends his Son into the

world, not to condemn the world, but to save it. The seriousness of the Gospels is infused with a divine love.

Of all hope, that of the Christian goes down deepest and soars highest, and therefore gives the greatest joy. The gift of Jesus to mankind has been his faith in the never-failing presence of an Infinite Love. He, first of all human beings, rose to this perfect and unfailing confidence, and so has inspired the human race with this divine influence, which will continue to work till the whole race is full of the knowledge of God. This is our hope in dark hours, in bereavements, in disappointments, in the midst of temptation and evil. This is our hope when good seems conquered and wickedness triumphant. This is our hope when we ourselves fail of our duty, and fall into wrong. It is that God is still our Father, Helper, Friend, and that all things will end in good at last. This is the hope, full of immortality, when we stand by the cold form of our dear ones, and when we ourselves bid farewell to life. This hope is the power of progress, the secret of improvement, the motive for earnest effort to make the world better and life happier. That is why we are told to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

The deep foundation on which hope rests is faith in goodness,—faith that God is goodness, and that therefore goodness is stronger than evil, and must at last conquer all evil. We see evil around us, and we find evil in ourselves; but,

if we really have faith in God, we are sure that the Divine Goodness will conquer it. With this unshaken trust planted in the soul, we can believe that all things are working together for ultimate happiness. Therefore, we can wait,—wait peacefully and patiently for that final triumph. We find God above all things, through all things, and in all things; and so we are safe, contented, satisfied. We see life advancing around us, the world growing better, and all things alive with the spirit of progress. We see one evil after another put down. The old superstitions which filled life with terror have disappeared in the advance of science. The bitter spirit of persecution has been softened. The time has passed, and passed forever, when it was thought a duty to burn witches and heretics. In our own day we have seen the end of slavery on this Northern Continent. So we have faith that other evils are also to disappear,—war, intemperance, pauperism, and bigotry in the Church. Jesus came to give this great hope to mankind, founded on his faith in God as Father and Friend. This is his gift to humanity, which enables us to pray that God's kingdom may come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. With this trust in the depth of the heart, what will not man patiently endure? He can bear infirmity, want, bereavement, loneliness, as long as he can say, with the apostle, that he is persuaded "that neither life, nor death, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things

present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any created thing, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Unhappily, Christians have not always held to this high hope. They have often allowed themselves to doubt the perfect love of the Father, and to relapse into the Paganism of the earlier ages. They have thought it a merit to be sad, and have placed religion in self-torture and ascetic denial. They have believed in dark superstitions, in the power of Satan, in a God of wrath, an everlasting hell by the side of an everlasting heaven. Thus, the great hope of Christ has been darkened in human hearts. And this is why it is necessary to say, "Rejoice!" "Rejoice in hope." "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice." Rejoice always! Not merely when you are well and strong and doing right, but when the clouds of evil and wrong close around you and darken your day. Rejoice always, for God is always near; and his support will never fail. Rejoice! for it is good and right to hope; and without hope we are without God in the world.

XVII

ALL THINGS ARE YOURS

"All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."— 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22.

The first symptom of those sectarian divisions which were to distract the church and weaken its energies appeared in Corinth during the life of Paul. They had their source in the Greek love of speculation. Already men began to put the essence of religion, not in life, but thought; not in following Christ, but in having correct notions about him. This was the foible of the Greek mind; that of the Jewish mind was the love of wonders, miracles, supernatural attestation of truth. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom," said Paul, touching with precision the peculiar peril of each. Thus it came to pass that in Corinth, a place of much intellectual activity, the first tendencies of sectarianism appeared. In the heart of a great Pagan community, this little Christian body, consisting mostly of persons of little influence, of humble position, of imperfect education, was already breaking up into several distinct sections. They were adopting distinct names, according to the

leaders whom they followed. Just as in later days men called themselves Lutherans, Calvinists, Wesleyans, Swedenborgians, because they agreed in opinion with Luther or Calvin, Wesley or Swedenborg, so, in Corinth, these took the names of Peter, Paul and Apollos. Those who called themselves by Peter's name conceived of Christianity as a developed Judaism, which was to retain the Jewish ritual unaltered; and their doctrine was that one could become a Christian only by passing through that Jewish door. The Jewish system was supernaturally appointed by God with miracles and signs. Its acceptance was not a question of reason, but of authority. They were not to ask whether it was reasonable, but only whether it was miraculously established. The Pauline Christians took a different view. Christianity, they said, had nothing to do with Judaism, any more than the butterfly with the chrysalis after it has been emancipated from it. Judaism was the chrysalis in which the organic life of the new religion was silently formed; now it was developed out of a national worship into a faith for mankind. The followers of Apollos were probably those who applied the symbolism of Philo to Christian facts, substituting philosophy for history.

Paul saw the danger. To his mind the danger was not the triumph or defeat of this or that doctrine, but making doctrine the essential thing. The evil lay in confounding theology

and religion, mistaking belief for faith, and turning Christianity into an intellectual system. He therefore puts his axe at the root of the tree. He declares that such doctrinal disputes belong to the flesh, not to the spirit, and the one essential thing in Christianity is its spiritual power over heart and life. Knowledge is partial and incomplete; doctrines change; only faith, hope and love abide. And in the course of this discussion he utters the profound statement of our text, that to those who have the spirit of Christ, all good things belong. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come." These poor, uninfluential, uneducated Christian men and women were the real owners of the world; all that was great and good belonged to them; apostles were not their masters, but their servants; they were the real possessors of this age and of coming ages. A wonderful statement! Let us see how far it can be justified.

Mr. Emerson, in his first book, explained how Nature and Art work for each of us. "All nature," he says, "works for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the rain feeds the plant; the plant the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man." "The private poor man," he adds, "hath cities, ships, canals built for him. He goes to the post-office, and the human race

run his errands; to the book shop, and the human race read and write of all that happens, for him; to the court house, and nations repair his wrongs. He sets his house upon the road, and the human race go forth every morning and shovel out the snow and make a path for him."

Thus, too, Herbert describes how all things in nature serve man:

"For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and waters flow.
All things unto our *flesh* are kind
In their descent and being; to our *mind*
In their ascent and cause.
O, mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him."

The important point, however, is not what nature or man does for us, but in what spirit we meet their gifts. They are not really ours till we take possession of them. We make them ours by putting our heart into them. It is the spirit of love by which we become masters of all good things. That is why Paul elsewhere speaks of himself and fellow-apostles "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

In this way great writers and their books become ours. We cannot make them ours merely by buying them and putting them on our shelves, nor by reading them as a task or a duty. It is when we become interested in a writer, when we enjoy his thoughts and enter into his spirit and

genius, that he really belongs to us. So Shakespeare is ours, Milton is ours, the great thinkers of every age—Plato, Lord Bacon, Locke, Homer and Herodotus, Dr. Johnson, Macaulay, Carlyle. We make them our own by our reverence, our sympathy, our interest in their thought. When we really put our heart into the study of such writers, they are henceforth our friends for life.

It is not the man who has bought the field or wood, not he who is the riparian proprietor of the lake shore, who really possesses their beauty. He who has a soul tuned to nature, who sees the glory and wonder of sunrise and sunset, the lights and shadows in the twilight forest, the changing tints on the mountain side; he takes possession of them.

"Other hands may grasp the field and forest,
Proud proprietors in pomp may shine,
But, with fervent love, if thou adorest,
Thou art wealthier — all the world is thine."

In proportion as our sympathies enlarge and our charity increases, we possess ourselves of ampler treasures. The man who is narrow, who is a sectarian, who is full of prejudices, shuts himself out from much that might help him. The Corinthians, who thought Peter's Christianity the only doctrine, learned no truth from Apollos or Paul. Those who maintained that Paul's church was the only true one lost the truth they might

have obtained from Apollos and Peter. But when they rose above this sectarianism, and were ready to see the true in every form of doctrine; then Paul, Apollos, and Peter, all three, were theirs, and they might gain something from all. So the Protestants who cannot see any good in the Roman Catholic Church, the Catholics who think all Protestants in fatal error, the Orthodox who believe Unitarians wholly wrong, or the Unitarians who cannot find any truth in Orthodoxy, walk in a narrow path, and lose many noble influences. Such prejudices blind the eyes. But when we are ready to believe that God does not leave himself without a witness in any human soul; then Christians may learn something from Brahmins and Buddhists; every sect may give and take something from the others; and we shall see how

> "All are needed by each one,
> Nothing is fair or good alone."

All great souls are ours when we are in sympathy with them. To whom do they belong—the heroes, saints, martyrs, apostles, prophets, who illuminate history as the stars fill the dark sky of night with luminous glory? Do they belong to the scholar who searches out the record of their lives, rectifies the date of their birth and death, criticizes the facts with judicial accuracy, or do they not rather belong to the men and women of like temper, whose hearts burn within

them at the recital of their deeds, and who have the same spirit actuating their own lives?

To every one who has within him a touch of nobleness, all that is noble in the heroism of mankind belongs. To every one who is ready to-day to speak a word for justice, to strike a blow for freedom, the noble army of martyrs comes as a support and inspiration. Algernon Sidney, one of that army, wrote in an Album in Copenhagen two Latin lines:

"Manus hæc inimica tyrannis
Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem."

"This hand, hostile to tyrants, seeks by the sword calm peace under the shelter of freedom." The second line was taken by Massachusetts as its motto, and stands on its shield. Under that motto the youth of Massachusetts went to fight and die to preserve union and to deliver an enslaved race. The soul of Sidney went with them as companion and inspiration. When the writer to the Hebrews had summoned the great names of Abraham and Moses and others of his race as examples of faith and devotion, and surrounded his poor persecuted brethren with this band of prophets and saints, he said: "Therefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race which is set before us." To this cloud of witnesses, each century as it passes adds new names, and they are all ours,

when we also are ready to take our stand for truth. The saints below, who usually do not know that they are saints, are attended by this company of saints above. This conviction inspired Raphael to paint that noble fresco in the Vatican, where he places in a group in the lower part the lights of the Church and the world—Aquinas and Savonarola, Augustine and Jerome, Dante and Perugino, not fearing to put himself among them; and in another group, just above, the majestic figures of patriarchs and apostles, as companions and friends. Thus the generosity and the faith of the past become ours, when we are ready to put a like faith and generosity into the present hour.

The world is ours. Paul said this of that ancient world, the world of imperial Rome and Pharisaic Judea, which was most hostile to Christianity. Persecuted by the Jews on one side, and by the heathen on the other, he yet declared that both these worlds belonged to Christianity. With the insight of his prophetic heart, he looked through the darkness of the present to the sure triumphs of the future, when "every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Let us, when we are discouraged, remember this; if he had no doubt then that evil would be overcome by good, shall we doubt it now? He was almost alone in his efforts for a larger faith; we live in the midst of progress, we are surrounded by movements for

good government, for temperance, for the rights of labor, for an honest currency, for the improvement of schools, for the enfranchisement of woman, and a hundred other reforms. True, there are many adversaries, many strong opponents. So there always have been, and so there always will be. But we have on our side, wherever we take a step forward, the society of apostles and prophets, the examples of progress, the long history of reform, the movement and spirit of our time, and the hopes of the human race. All are ours.

Life is ours. The joy of life is born out of courage and hope. Those possess life most fully who devote it to good ends. You will never find the workers asking whether life is worth living. Whoever is engaged in a useful task feels the currents of the warm blood of his race coursing happily through his veins. Good work makes life cheerful and hopeful. Only the indolent, the self-indulgent, those who stand outside of the flowing stream of humanity, find life not worth living. And such a life as theirs is perhaps not worth living. But those who are hard at work for anything good and true can adopt the language of the apostle and say, "Unknown and yet well known; dying and behold we live; chastened, but not killed; sorrowful, but always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Never was one who had less of the enjoyments of the out-

ward life than Paul. He says: "Down to the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are naked and buffeted, we have no certain home, we labor, working with our own hands, being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it." But, for all that, he was one of the happiest of men, for he was working with his whole soul for a great cause. Life is ours whenever we are thus occupied.

And death is ours. Paul puts death with life, as though one were just as good as the other. Death has been surrounded with gloom by a false theology, but to one who lives in the faith and spirit of Jesus, it is simply a step forward. It is going up, perhaps a good deal, or perhaps a little way; it is going onward; it is resurrection; that is, rising into a higher condition of being. The law of life is progress, evolution, ascent. Those who are imbued with the spirit of the Master feel that immortality begins here; eternal life is with us now; the light of that world is already in our souls whenever we are living for generous ends. That world, like this, must be full of God and his presence. Like this, it must be full of opportunity, knowledge, work, beauty. Whatever powers we have cultivated here, will find employment there. In that sphere we shall, no doubt, understand better than now the secret of sorrow, shall see more clearly than now the radiance of love. I do not think we shall comprehend at once all mysteries and all knowledge, for the next life, like this, must be a scene of

progress. But death will be as good as life, since God gives us both.

Thus all things work together for good to those that love God. Things present and things to come are equally ours. The future lies hid in the present, and if we so act as to possess the present, we also possess the future. The best way to prepare for death is to prepare for life. Make ready every day to live to some good purpose; put into every day some generous thought for others, some help, some sympathy, some good-will, and then you take possession of this world and the next.

To do this effectually and constantly we must have faith and hope. Love is born out of these. Without faith in a divine presence and a divine love we become discouraged in our efforts to do good. Love to man is born out of love to God. And love to God is born out of faith in him as an all-surrounding, all-attending presence; as one who cares for us because he has made us for himself; as one always patient with our weakness and folly, and able to overcome our evil with his good. Believing in such a divine compassion and care, which never leaves us, we can receive strength from this source with which to do something for our fellowmen. We can work for others when we know that into our open and trusting hearts new power will always come from above. If God asks us to do anything for others, he will give us the power with which to do it. Thus "all things

are ours" when we feel that we are Christ's and that Christ is God's."

You will notice that Paul here suddenly changes the form of his statement. After saying that all things are ours, that life and death are ours, that things present and things to come are ours, he does not go on, as we might have expected, to say, "Christ is ours and God is ours." Why not? Christ is our brother and our Saviour. God is our Father, our Supporter, our Confidence. But Paul prefers to say that we belong to them, rather than to say that they belong to us. "We are Christ's and Christ is God's."

I suppose Paul felt that it would bring us nearer to God to think that we belonged to him, than to say that he belonged to us. If we say, "God belongs to us, he is ours," we mean that we have some claim on his care as a faithful creator. But when we say that "we are his" we become altogether his. He can never be more than partially ours, but we are altogether his. We are taken to his heart and held safe in the hollow of his hand. He belongs to us, in part, as the protector and providence on whom it is our privilege to call. We belong to him as those whom he has made for himself, and will never leave nor forsake.

XVIII

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

"Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."—2 Cor. 9. 15.

We have just kept the usual festival of Thanksgiving. This holiday season, beginning in New England, has now spread itself over the whole land, and has grown into a national festival, appointed annually not only by the governor of each commonwealth, but also by the President of the United States. It has thus become national and universal, because it was in accordance with the desires of the whole people. Its authority comes solely from its fitness and seasonableness. All the proclamations of all the executives could not establish it if the people themselves did not desire it. And while New England has given its Thanksgiving to the other States, it has received from them Christmas in return. In my boyhood there was no Christmas kept in New England, and no Thanksgiving kept outside of New England. Now the festival of harvest and home has gone as far as Georgia and Oregon, and the Merry Christmas of Old England has been welcomed back again by her Puritan children in Massachusetts.

The text says, "Thanks be to God for his un-

speakable gift." Before we consider what this unspeakable gift is, let us consider those which can be easily spoken of.

What a wonderful world is this into which we have been born! What beauty, what variety, what majestic presence of law, what vast order, what infinite adaptations to the purposes of life! We go out on a summer morning. We see the rosy clouds hanging around the horizon where the sun is approaching. He rises, and sky and land are bathed in a sea of beauty. Thousands of little birds welcome his approach with songs of joy. The tremulous dewdrops turn to rubies and emeralds on the myriad leaves in the vast forests; little flowers open their eyes over boundless prairies. The frozen snow on the mighty summits of the mountains grows warm in the tender auroral radiance. The immeasurable smile of old ocean flashes upward along the meridian from the ices of the Arctic to those of the Antarctic seas. Living things go forth to breakfast on the seeds and fruits ripened under the great solar influence. Man also goes forth to his work and his labor, creating another world of art and use, a microcosm in the macrocosm. He also is allowed to be a creator in his little sphere. He builds cities, erects cathedrals, invents machinery, multiplies his force a thousand times by his discoveries, constructs navies which traverse all seas, and connect the continents and their various industries. He writes books, tunes his tongue to

delicious music, brings down ideal forms from heaven to earth, with imagination all compact, and embodies in lasting beauty the immortal thoughts which breathe and burn within his soul. Life is a little day, but how it is filled with opportunity for knowledge, for work, for love. It has room in it for the sublime voices of prophets, bards, leaders, reformers, saints and martyrs. It has room for the happy homes of those whose sober wishes do not learn to stray from the cool sequestered vale of familiar affections. It has room for dear little children, innocent infants, with an aureole of divine light around them. It has room for generosity, patience, hope and self-denying love. It has room for pain borne without repining, for bereavement sustained by faith, for a death made sweet by an infinite hope. It has room for love of wife and husband, for the tenderness of the parent and the piety of the child. It has joys and work and duties for youth, manhood and age. These gifts are evident; they are new every morning. God opens his hand and supplies the wants of every living thing. He is the perpetual giver. His joy is in never-ceasing creation. The fountain of his love pours forth new supplies each moment. If his gifts are perpetually passing away, it is that they may be forever renewed. If it is more blessed for man to give than to receive, this is the blessedness of God, that he has not made a

world to go on by itself, but renews it every hour by perpetual creative bounty.

And what a wonderful gift is the human soul! What mysterious powers are hidden therein, slowly evolved into grand activities. How strange that each of us should be a person, forever himself, with a great gulf separating him from all other persons. I, always myself, you, always yourself, forever a pure unit of individual consciousness! And yet that this personal unit, so limited and confined, should be able to unite itself in thought with past and present, with the universe of space and time; should be able to reach out to the stars, weigh and measure the planets; should be able to recall the history of the earth and unroll its geological record; should be able to analyze substances burning in the furnaces of sun and stars; able to send by lightning its messages under the ocean and over the continent; able to enter with sympathetic thought into the mind of Homer, Dante and Milton; able to know Christ and love him; able to live a life of communion with eternal right and infinite good—this is the most marvelous fact of all, and for all this we may well thank God every day and every hour.

But why should we praise God? He does not need words of praise. He cannot love praise as men desire it. He is not jealous, as earthly kings are jealous, of honor withdrawn from him or

given to another. Even a good man does not desire to be praised for his goodness; he prefers to do his good works unknown of men, as Jesus recommends. He does not let his left hand know what his right hand does. How then can God desire the praise of his creatures?

To this many would answer: "He wishes our praise not for his own sake, but only for ours. It does us good to be grateful. Gratitude enlarges the heart; ingratitude hardens it. Therefore God asks for our gratitude and worship, our adoration and thanksgiving, because it makes us better to render it."

This is true as far as it goes, but only half the truth. To thank God when we know that he does not desire our thanks, and takes no pleasure in them except for our good, would be a barren offering, and almost unnecessary. There is a sense in which God may enjoy the thanks of his creatures. If those thanksgivings of ours spring not from the mind only; but the heart also; if they come from love, then even the Infinite Majesty of Heaven may find joy in the grateful heart of creation. For love unites the high and the low. Pure love is never wasted, it never fails; it is greater than faith and hope; it is the essential thing in prayer, it is that which makes obedience twice blessed. Who can ever despise or be indifferent to sincere love? It is the greatest gift of God to men, the only return men can make to God.

This, then, is "the unspeakable gift," the gift which makes the value of all other gifts. We do not value a gift from man unless we see in it some love. How can we be grateful for anything given only with the hand and not with the heart, given from a mere sense of duty, given by rule, or custom, or law? You could not be very grateful to a man even for saving your life if he did it thinking of his own glory, or as a mere function of his business, "perfunctorily," as we say. No! unless a man puts some heart into his gift, he has no right to ask for gratitude. We complain that men are not grateful for our benevolence. Are *you* grateful for anything done for you by those who do not love you, who help you merely out of self-respect, or to retain the respect of others? No! There must be some element of love in a gift to make it of any value.

Real ingratitude then, the fatal ingratitude, comes from those who are unable or unwilling to recognize love in a giver. He who believes that men are only selfish, he who attributes selfish motives to all human acts, has made himself incapable of gratitude. He who reasons thus in order to justify his own selfishness, cannot be grateful. No matter how generously he may be treated, he does not see the generosity; he invents some personal motive to account for it. The generous man looks for generosity, the selfish man expects selfishness, and each finds what he looks for.

The "unspeakable gift," therefore, which

gives value to God's other gifts, is the love which is in them. It is "unspeakable," for who can describe even human love, much less infinite love? But what we cannot describe we can see and know. Who can describe the perfume of a violet? Yet we know it, and know its difference from the odor of mignonette, or that of a rose. Who can describe the melody in the song of a nightingale, or the music of a gentle voice? But we know these, and can recall them after long years. So we may know, though we cannot describe, this unspeakable gift of Divine Love.

Men may receive all God's other gifts; and if no love is seen in them, they will awaken no gratitude. A man of taste may be gratified, but hardly grateful, in the sight of outward beauty. It may please his ideality and imagination, but leave his heart cold. The sight of vast laws may gratify our desire for knowledge; a man may do right simply because it is right, and will find satisfaction in so doing. But the "unspeakable gift" may not be in any of these blessings.

It is not till we see love in God's gifts that we are grateful; and when we see love, we cannot help being grateful.

But is not this the wonder of wonders, the most inexplicable and unspeakable fact—that the Infinite Being, the Being of Beings, the great order of the universe, the profound substance beneath all existence,—He who is above the reach of reason, imagination, philosophy, should not be above

the reach of love? We see power everywhere, wisdom everywhere, benevolent adaptations everywhere; but before the personal being, the great heart of the universe, there hangs an impenetrable veil. To the intellect this mystery is unfathomable. But there was one human soul able to draw aside that veil; one who from the first spoke of God as *Father*. The inspired heart of Jesus went to a depth far below that of the philosophic reason. It came near to the heart of God. And so he was a revelation, never before made, of the *Father*. Therefore, he who has seen him has seen the Father. No one comes to the Father but by him. We can come to the Infinite Being by the broad highway of reason. Plato shows us the divine element in all human nature. Spinoza shows us a divine substance beneath all phenomena. Science, star-eyed, brings us today no doctrine of despair, but announces power above law, behind force, supremely divine. But who except Jesus has revealed the deeper mystery of divine love? To him alone it was given to show to mankind that within all other gifts is this "unspeakable gift" of love. There have, indeed, been mystics in all religions, who have sought by ascetic practices, by solitary prayer, by monastic self-denial, to purify themselves so as to meet God in their soul. But Jesus brings God's love to all,—not to the thinker, or the monk, or the anchorite only, but to the humblest child of the Infinite Friend. The sailor on the

high and giddy mast can feel beneath him the everlasting arms. The young soldier, dying in pain on the battlefield, can say "My Father!" and be at peace. The sinner in the midst of temptation can utter in his heart a cry for help, and be pardoned and saved. The little child can talk with this dear Father, and its childish prattle will reach the infinite ear.

This is the key to the ardent language of Paul. This is why he forever repeats the name of Christ. This is why he says we are rooted and grounded in love. To Paul there came from Jesus this divine revelation of a great Fatherhood, and it broke the bonds of his Pharisaic literalism, of his routine religion; took him out of his ritual, ceremonies, texts of Scripture, into a new life of perfect trust and hope and joy. "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain." "The life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God." "I live, but not I, Christ lives in me." Christ to him was the manifestation of a divine tenderness, of which he had never before dreamed. So that, no matter what happened to him, he was sitting in heavenly places with Jesus; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

And this unspeakable gift was not given to Jesus alone, or to Paul alone, but is given to you and to me. To us the word of this salvation is also sent. Salvation! for what can be more safe than to feel ourselves in the embrace of an infinite love. Salvation! for we know that our sins will

be destroyed, and our evil cleansed, by coming into this heavenly atmosphere of love. Salvation! for how can we continue to sin if we are kept in the presence of our Father?

Draw near, then, in faith, to this great overflowing fountain of heavenly compassion. God has put into our hearts his spirit to enable us all to say "Our Father!" Let nothing separate us from his love—neither life nor death nor our own folly and sin, our own weakness and ignorance, our own doubt or unbelief. Let us not be troubled by harsh doctrines. God asks for none of these things at our hands. Sacrifice and offering he does not require—not the sacrifice of our own reason before unintelligible mysteries. He says only this: "My son, give me thy heart!" And to enable us to do so, he shows his own love to every soul that he has made—shows how he leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness and goes after the one sheep that is lost; how he so loved the world as to give the only one who had risen to the height of perfect Sonship—his only Son—to bring the same sense of a Father's love to the rest of his children. He allowed this dearest child to die, in torture and shame, that we, by that solemn sacrifice, might be lifted out of darkness into marvelous light. So now, we can behold in all his gifts this unspeakable gift of a Fatherly love. Now, every outward blessing has in it a touch of divine tenderness. Now we see in the universe, not only

beauty and wonder, power, order, law—but interfused and penetrating all things—that highest of all created things, a Divine Love. Hold fast to it; let it not go, for it is your life! To trust in the Father's love is the gospel within the gospel; it is the inmost secret of Christianity; it is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

XIX

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF LIFE

It is good for us to be here.— Mark ix: 5.

The Transfiguration is one of the events in the life of Jesus which at present is inexplicable. We cannot explain it or understand it, because we have nothing similar with which to compare and classify it. That the human form should have the power of radiating light under certain conditions is not, in itself, more improbable than that fireflies and glow-worms should give out light. The difficulty is that we have no other cases of the same sort (at least, none well authenticated) with which to compare it. If this power of radiating light should become common, then all men would readily believe in this transfiguration of Jesus; and yet we might not understand it one whit better than we do now. Nor is there anything antecedently improbable in the appearance of Moses and Elijah. If those whom we call dead are living, as we believe, in a higher state, why should they not sometimes, on great occasions, or for special reasons, show themselves? Here, again, the only improbability of the fact is derived from its not being customary. No law of nature that we are acquainted with would

be violated by such an event as the transfiguration.

The transfiguration of Jesus, therefore, illustrates the difference between what is unintelligible and what is irrational. It is not irrational that the soul should, in its highest moments, glorify the body; it is merely something we do not understand and cannot explain.

As therefore there is nothing impossible or antecedently improbable, in the transfiguration, we are justified in accepting the testimony of the three evangelists, who relate it as a matter of fact to which there were three witnesses. It is not at all likely that they should have invented such an occurrence, being honest men. Nor could three persons have been easily deceived in regard to it. Some say it was a dream; but three men do not usually dream the same dream at the same time, and then mistake it for a reality. To suppose it a myth, which grew up out of the fact of the luminous face of Moses recorded in Exodus, is contradicted by the accurate details of time and place, the simplicity of the narrative, and the names of the eye-witnesses. A wise conclusion, therefore, would be that it is an account of a real event, the nature of which we are at present unable to understand.

But this much, at least, we can understand—that it was the transfiguration of the body by the soul—the soul shining out through the body. It was a higher example of what we see every day,

the body glorified by the soul. When the soul of man is roused by any high excitement, the aspect of the body is changed. When the great Earl of Chatham rose on his feet on great occasions, a single glance of his eye would quell his opponent, the very tone of his voice would carry conviction. When Dr. Channing rose in the pulpit to preach, his voice at first was feeble, his stature seemed diminutive, his face without expression. But, as he went on, his figure appeared to expand and enlarge, his eye became full of solemn fire, his voice thrilled through the house, and his face became like that of an angel. Such an angelic look I have seen on the face of the dying and the dead. They, also, were, perhaps, talking with Moses and Elias, with Jesus and his apostles, or the spirits of just men made perfect. Who has not seen the plain face grow beautiful with the fire of intelligence, the homely features made lovely by the radiance of goodwill and generosity? The highest beauty of the face is the beauty of the soul. No regularity of feature, no delicacy of outline, no tints or forms, constitute beauty. That heavenly element comes from the soul, which o'erinforms its tenement of clay. There can be no beauty without soul; there can be no ugliness with it.

If this is the essential meaning of the transfiguration, if it means the power of the soul to glorify body, then it belongs to a class of moments which come in all of our lives. There

are hours when we rise to a higher mood of conviction, feeling, purpose; and in such hours nature is transfigured, life is transfigured, work is transfigured, sorrows and joys, pains and pleasures, all things around and within, are glorified and seem more noble in the illumination of the soul itself. And the memory of such moments remains with us, to cheer and sustain us in darker hours, and to keep up our faith in goodness and in God.

There are hours in life in which nature is transfigured—when we seem to see the soul in nature. In moments of depression, when the heart is cold and dead, the outward world seems cold and dead, also. But the soul which is filled with faith and hope and love fills all outward objects with the same joy. So St. Francis went out to pray in company with the birds. So St. Bonaventura describes the rapture of devotion as influencing the body, and making us wish to embrace every creature of God. So Socrates, sitting under the plane tree near the Ilissus, says, "I seem, O Phaedrus, to be borne away by a divine impression coming from this lovely place, for the place where we sit seems also divine." Socrates, therefore, and the mediæval saints, had the same experience which Wordsworth expresses when he speaks of

> "that blessed mood
> In which the burden of the mystery
> Of all this unintelligible world

Is lightened — that serene and blessed mood
In which, the breath of this corporeal frame
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body and become a living soul,
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

Nature grows alive with the life of the soul. The romantic view of nature expressed by the great modern poets, in which it is all alive, comes from the Christian spirit in modern thought. The ancients knew very little of it. George Fox, the Quaker, says that when he was first converted to faith in the divine love, and went out into the fields, the whole world around him glowed with new life. The skies were full of a divine presence. The air breathed a divine love. The birds in their songs seemed to say, "Let us praise God." The same spirit in the Hebrew Psalms calls on the hills to clap their hands, and the waters above and below to be thankful. So is nature transfigured by the soul, and grows full of life.

In such hours nature is transfigured. Then we see God in nature and our heart drinks peace from sky and land. An ineffable beauty seems spread over the scene, and we wist not what to say, for language cannot utter it. There are some spring and October days which are like a concert or oratorio—when earth, air, trees, sunshine, blue sky, grass, are all in the same happy mood, all in tune together, no discord to jar the

full harmony. In such days the earth becomes a Bible—the rocky strata its Book of Genesis, the singing of the birds its Book of Psalms, the air full of sunlight and fragrance its Gospels, and the changing lights, the advancing hours, its Book of Revelation, showing to us how God is all in all.

Sorrow also is transfigured by the soul. What pang so sharp, what anguish so terrible, that has not been borne by martyrs with content, and a face sweetened with smiles? Why do we like to see a tragedy on the stage but that in it sorrow is transfigured by poetry and wisdom, and so deprived of its sting? I heard Washington Allston once describe Mrs. Siddons and Miss O'Neill as he heard them in the part of Belvidera. He said that to listen to Miss O'Neill was like being in a mad-house and hearing the shrieks of the insane; but that in the acting of Mrs. Siddons, the madness was transfigured and touched with a plaintive beauty, and so idealized that its pathos went to the very depths of the heart. Faith in God, seeing his great hand in events, does for our anguish what this consummate actress did in the play. Faith in God pours beauty and joy into all earthly sorrows, and thus transfigures them all and makes them a part of the kingdom of heaven.

There are other hours in which work is transfigured—in which it does not appear drudgery, but a mission; in which it is noble to do any-

thing for God and man; in which every duty is attractive. All work becomes a divine calling then, and we can see that men are not only called to be apostles, but also called to be carpenters, called to be merchants, soldiers, sailors; called to be artists, inventors, and that one can sweep a room for the sake of God, man, truth, and be happy and Christian in doing it. And until our work is thus transfigured, and we see religion in it, it must be often a burden and drudgery.

The sight of great truths, and devotion to great causes, transfigures, also, our friendship and our love. Friendship is only a habit of being together; love is only a fire of straw, flaring and falling away in a moment, unless its soul is some generous common aim, some noble common inspiration. But with these, when we talk with our friends, they are transfigured and we are talking with Moses and Elias, with prophets and saints. Their garments are white as the light; their faces shine as the sun. For as Jesus is the mirror in which we see the face of God, so are all good men and women, in their better moments, the illustration to our hearts of the great prophets and saints of the earth. They are our prophets and saints, our heroes and martyrs. What would life be without them? They encourage our faith in all things good and fair, and open to us beforehand, the portals of a higher world.

And so, sometimes, Christ becomes transfigured to us, as he once was to Peter and John. Sometimes we seem to see him and understand him far better than at other times. Our hearts burn within us as he talks with us. He opens to us the Scriptures. Technicalities fall away. We do not ask any theological questions about Jesus, whether he was Son of God or man, natural or supernatural. But we seem to see our Master and Friend, as Stephen saw him, in the midst of his torment, a dear human face, a look of compassionate tenderness to us, a pity for our temptations and sins, a divine heart, full of God, yet a human heart, all manhood and womanhood, too. And the Scriptures grow clear in such moments; grow intensely interesting, whereas they were before dull. Now every word is bursting with fresh life: The Bible becomes transfigured; it is like earth in this springtime, every part swelling into leaves and blossoms, every part instinct with life. We watch the words of the Bible, expecting to find something new in them, as parents watch the little infant, day by day, to trace the dawning of some fresh intelligence, the unfolding of some new power.

So, also, is death transfigured to us, as we live in the light of God's truth and love. The old death is abolished. There is no such thing as death, only change, only progress since Christ came. The other world grows fair and near; grows sweet and tender; it repels no more; it

attracts us. We enjoy this life, are glad to stay and work; we are ready for the other, being sure that also will bring us enough to know, enough to love, enough to do.

Such are the hours of transfiguration which God sends us from time to time, to ennoble our lives. We sometimes call them the coming of the Holy Spirit. These moments of inward illumination are the master-lights of all our being. They go with us, hid in our heart, when we go away from God and truth. They are there, undying convictions, from which we can never escape, teaching us that truth, right, goodness, are realities, and shall never pass away.

These hours of transfigured life are so precious that we wish to detain them. But this is not the law of our existence. When Peter said, "It is good to be here," he said the truth; but when he added, "Let us build three tents or huts and stay here," he wist not what he said. Monasticism tried to build such tents in these high places of life, and to live on the Mount of Transfiguration, but failed. Sentimental and emotional piety try to live in the upper air of high wrought enthusiasm, in the solitudes of devotion, always alone with the only God. But that fails also. It is not meant that we should always live on this mountain, in this high, lonely solitude of worship. We must come down, as Jesus did, to mingle with the world, and do our work in the world. The three tents which only can be

built for us on this Mount of Transfiguration are erected by poetry, art and religion. But they are not tents to live in, only to go and refresh ourselves in and return again to our work. Poetry pours a charm over life, and gives us a place of repose. It adds a beauty to existence, and idealizes the most common lot. Poets like Burns and Whittier make the rude huts of the Scotch peasant, or the prosaic homes of New England, full of romance, and the most everyday life a lyric. The poet walks in glory and in joy, following his plough along the side of the mountain. To him the smallest flower that blows can give thoughts that lie too deep for tears. Is it not a delightful thing that in the hardest, coldest, grayest life, there should always be the power of walking with Dante, or Homer, or Shakspeare through their worlds of enchantment? Thus poetry builds one tent on the Mount of Transfiguration, where we can go to commune with the prophets and bards, the heroes and saints, of all time.

And another tent is built by art. There is a vast deal of talk about art in these times, and there is danger in the abundance of words of losing the reality. What is true art but that which seeks to embody the moments in which nature and life are transfigured? Art is not a mere imitation, however correct, of the commonplace objects around us. A true portrait is not an accurate transfer to canvas of the average

man eating, drinking, talking commonplace. But a true portrait divines and retains the noblest moments of the soul; gives us the man at his best, when he rose above care and evil into the sight of truth. The true landscape painter gives us Nature transfigured by the soul. We delight in a picture of Claude or Poussin, because it not only expresses what the artist saw, but adds to it a gleam of lustre known neither to sea nor land, but borrowed from the soul itself. Thus art is meant to build a tent on the Mount of Transfiguration, into which we can go and be refreshed, and return again to the world and to our work, able to do it better for these glimpses of a higher world.

Religion also builds its tent on the Mount of Transfiguration. We go up out of the hard work or the heavy sorrows of life into those higher regions, where we can rest for a little while in the peace of God. Every Sunday is such a tent built on the Mount of Transfiguration. To how many thousands of struggling, suffering souls does each Sunday bring a momentary peace; a vision of something better than this hard life can give! To what great multitudes, to whom poetry is nothing, art nothing, does not religion come, so that they see the heavens opened for a little while, and sit in heavenly places with apostles, prophets and martyrs! When you see the multitudes of Roman Catholics around the church which has been built by the gifts of the

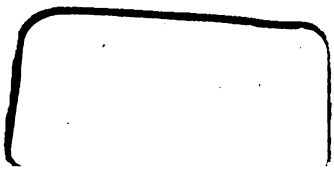
poor, do not think that it is only superstition which holds them to it. No! but it is the one place where many a soul rises out of a merely animal existence into faith and hope, and feels itself a child of God. It is the only solace and consolation of thousands who are crushed down by hard realities. To them poetry is nothing, art nothing, nature nothing; but through their church they get a momentary glimpse of an ideal world, and rise into a sense of the dignity of human existence.

Is it not a blessed thing that there is this Mount of Transfiguration where the humblest human being can talk with Moses and Elijah, with Jesus and the apostles, with the goodly company of prophets and the noble army of martyrs?

The poor widow, with her Bible in her hand, can enter this grand fellowship. Her eyes are opened, and she walks in Paradise with God and the angels. What matters it that she is living in a garret or a cellar? When she opens that book, she passes through the golden gates into the New Jerusalem, and has a foretaste of joys which the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. What to her are the riches and glories of this world? She is "rich in a more precious treasure, eloquent in a more sublime language, noble by the right of an earlier creation, and priest by the imposition

of a mightier hand." Her Bible tells her that she was foreordained before the foundation of the world to be the heir of glory, honor and immortality. "To her has the Almighty proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist and the harp of the prophet. She has been rescued by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe." For her has Jesus been tempted in the wilderness, and agonized in the garden; for her sake, he prayed on the mountain, and offered up his life on the cross. The Bible is all the literature she has; but that is enough to redeem her life from weariness, and fill it with visions of beauty and hope.

"See thou tell no man," was the command of Jesus. "Tell no man of the vision." These hours are not to be talked about. Those who tell their religious experiences over and over again turn them into empty talk. These deeper convictions and sentiments are only for ourselves, or for our most intimate friends, or for those who need them in their hour of need, not for argument or display or common conversation.

Let us thank God for these hours on the Mount of Transfiguration. They make our common life better and nobler. When we think of them, we know that God and duty and goodness are realities. We go on our common way illuminated by those heavenly visions. They preserve us from doubt and despair. They are the

seed of a better future for us all; the small kernels, the little acorns, into which God has put the vast harvests and noble forests of the coming years.